Interview: Participant 1

# I: So one of the first things I thought was if you could tell me your discipline and your research field?

F: I'm in Sociology. I work on two different larger projects, looking at ITC and Social Quality and communities and cultures using digital technologies and everyday cultural communities from a social scientific point of view. Working with small communities, use of digital media to form their narrative, what kind of narratives did they form? And seeing how artists influence politics Then the other project I'm working on is a cross-national survey we've put together. Looking at youth uses of media - youth in generation and uses of media, a variety of different media, whether they trust, whether they use it for politics and different aspects of that. I've been desperately trying to figure out how the migration, ICT all come together and I figured a way of describing all of these under an umbrella so that's now what I've been pushing everything towards – every one of those is an aspect of social quality or a lack of social quality, analysing them through that lens.

# I: It's one of these things – we've met and we've had conversations and I know bits of roughly what you do but I didn't really know all of it.

F: Yes, the social quality and ICT – or using the social quality model using ICT and qualitative things. By using that I'm able to combine the two projects and – if you work part-time on different projects somehow you never actually end up ever going home or stopping working and you've got an emergency on one and it crushes the other and then…you know, you should be working full-time on one project or one aspect of a project and instead you are working part-time on multiple projects.

# I: This is the juggling of the different…

F: Yes, I've got a list but everything is in red. You can write lists and lists and lists.

# I: Yeah. So, how do you currently use social media in your research? You were describing a couple of projects that had things about media but…?

F: Yeah, well I had to since I was – it's a bit of a fluke they needed somebody right away so I ended up on that. And for that project, I'd seen it through work/life balance and I had been looking at post-materialism for a while and I've chucked the post-materialism because it's not a very good structure to analyse things and brought in the social quality model instead. But it seemed interesting, something very interesting that we could go out and do and I wasn't really sure about what was going on with it but I figured I could put my hand to it; I can do qualitative and quantitative - it's social science, I can figure it out. But in order to do it I actually had to understand what social media stuff was and I didn't, I kind of understood some things but it's my idea that – strategic Googling is the answer to everything, Google it and figure out the answer to any question. And so I got on Twitter and I had to play around and figure out what was going on on Twitter, I'm always interested in politics anyway so I followed a couple of different politicians and newspapers to start getting into that. That is what then spawned the entire idea for the project. Because – everybody keeps referring to this group, 'go look at that group', so I went and looked at that group and started following them on Twitter and they gave a lot of information. They are actively engaging in politics with politicians, they are using their talents to engage with these things, this is exactly what we are looking for. So I managed to get permission to go and do that and then took a while before I got ethics permission or got permission from the actual group to work with them. So yes, that's where –for that particular project I'm trying to explain to them how they can download their Twitter archive so I can have access to their Twitter archive and see everything that they've Tweeted and that's how I'm using the social media on that.

 The other aspects of social media that I use with some of the rural communities that are bringing in broadband, it was just a kind of scan of Facebook to see how – the problem with a lot of the communities is they do things privately so that if you've got privacy settings – far too many people think 'oh, if it's on social media everybody can see it.' No, if they put up their privacy settings we don’t know who they are, where they are or whether they exist. And there's a lot of the older people or the middle-aged people don't use anything the way that younger people do. So social media works with younger or technologically keyed in demographics but if you are trying to deal with older people, social media is really not something to look at.

# I: So I think you've already answered this but I was going to say – you use Facebook and Twitter, is that your main ones you use?

F: Yeah.

# I: So you use them for research?

F: I'm technically on LinkedIn and they send me annoying emails. That's all I do.

# I: So you do research for research around Twitter and Facebook, do you also use it for putting out your research out there?

F: I haven't really because when I was first on Twitter it was just to explore it to find out what was going on with it. And so that when somebody said something about hashtag I understood it. And then it started – I started using it for the research and then I realised that while I was just goofing off with it to find out how to use it I put a lot of things out there and you reaslise that's not something you want to connect to me publically as my research persona. Because personally I'm very loud and have very strong opinions on things and I have very strong political opinions on things, I don't want that necessarily to be aligned with work. So I ended up setting up a private email so that I could set up the Twitter just to go with that and not associated with my work. But there's not really a lot of time – with everything else that we have to do, all the other writing that we have to do is then to build up a Twitter profile around my research to try and get people to follow me. I mean, I do – I've seen some people who do it well. I've seen some people who do it **really** well but there's other academics that I see and they don't do it well at all.

# I: It's quite a big commitment.

F: Yeah, it's a big commitment, you have to be careful about what you say the entire time. And then you have to be very, very careful about how other people interpret your work. I'm really conscious about putting my stuff out there on Twitter or on Facebook or on the Conversation because when it's in the public – the public doesn't necessarily…the public has a really bad understanding of science in general and when they read something they interpret it – even, for example, , a historian, who cannot read a set of tables and interpret a set of tables from a survey,. It doesn't show that because you have a particular stance that you have a particular IQ. It's completely skewed everybody against somebody who didn’t actually say that.

# I: Yes, it's been misinterpreted.

F: Yes, it's been misinterpreted

# I: Do you find social media has that risk more, are you aware of that when you are doing your research?

F: I don't think it necessarily has that risk more than – I don't think it has that risk more than some getting hold of your research. It's, yeah, it has that same risk but if it's on social media then it's a lot easier for the type of people who misread things to get ahold of it. Because I don't think that some tabloid is going to be paying attention to me but when I put it on Twitter I'm on an equal stance with all the people who are higher ranking and have the media training. And suddenly you go and compete against people who have good media training.

# I: So, when you are using social media do you use any tools to help you access the social media or the social media data?

F: Tools? Like Google analytics and things like that?

# I: Anything like that.

F: I'm really wary of those. Really.

# I: So do you just use the Twitter interface or?

F: Yes, I just use the Twitter interface, I just use Facebook. I don't like these because – I see some of the tools that they use are way too similar to (NVivo's) autocode, it's a machine doing your work and a machine doesn't always do the best work. Yes, the machine will do a wonderful job of counting how many numbers or how many hashtags or how many followers something has. That means nothing qualify-able, yes, they can count – the machine can count things up for you, wonderful. So we know how many followers you have, we know how many people had this hashtag. Did we recognise the sarcasm? No, we didn’t. This is another reason why I'm very wary about it, I've seen people attempting social research fall flat on their faces and make – well this is part of the problem with people seeing social researchers is they see the ones who do it badly.

# I: So you've been looking at how people put opinions out there for the political thing and how that goes back, so how do you store the Tweets or the record of what's been said at the minute?

F: What I've done is mainly – I've done some interviews and those are just data files that are then transcribed, I've got those– this is the great thing about what this, one of the reasons why it's really interesting to work with this particular group is they specifically set themselves up so that their content could go online but could be taken offline for campaigning. So every one of their website posts can be printed out in a full-scale PDF. So it's all PDFs, they all download PDF, every one of their posts so they've gone between certain times, downloaded every one of the PDFs and then analysing it all NVivo.

# I: So you just have every Tweet as a PDF?

F: No, not the Tweets, their website and then the Twitter – unfortunately they still haven't gotten me the Twitter archive, they've said they'll give me the Twitter archive but they haven't figured out how to request it or they've gotten busy and not…

# I: So you are going to get a copy of all of their Tweets from them?

F: Yes, so it comes to you in a file. Actualy that does remind me, I need to go to my Twitter account to see if I can..what kind of…to practice it so that I can instruct them exactly how to do it.

# I: Do you plan on getting just their side of it or do you want to see who has re-tweeted it, the responses back and forth…?

F: That's actually something I need to check with, I'll be able to get their Tweets, so each of their Tweets I'll count as a document. So each of their Tweets is a document and in NVivo you can put in specific quoting about all of the documents. So, for example, what I'm doing right now with the website posts is there's comments below so every one of the comments is an additional thing and then so how they framed it, who was it by – because they had a couple of repeat people – and then who commented on it, how many comments were there, were the comments positive or negative. That's all in there, it's something that I've coded as quantifiable data. So then we can see what seemed to be the most popular online things and that's something similar that I'm going to do with the Tweets is each of the Tweets will be something that's there and then the number of re-Tweets, the numbers of responses, the number of favourites will be just data-coded in.

# I: So ok, so will you be wanting to connect up – if someone has seen something on Twitter, to whether they go to their website or if someone else, say, re-tweets their comment on multiple Tweets, is that something you would want to…?

F: That's something you can do in NVivo, that's something that is – it's more complicated, it's possible that I might do it in the future, at the moment it's a fairly short time thing, I'm essentially trying to find out how did they frame the argument and then was that used elsewhere. But this will be data that is then available to continue using – what I'd like to do is you can do linking between the different things that you've put in to the NVivo. So I can link the Tweet, you know every time they've Tweeted about going to the website .

# I: So I think you've already said this – so mainly NVivo, is that your main source for analysing?

F: Yes, that's my analysis. I do the analysis, the NVivo is just the best organisational tool. It really gets my hackles up if anybody says anything about 'oh, so you use autocode', no. I don't.

# I: So you want a good tool that lets you do the analysis, makes it easy to do the analysis…

F: It lets you do the links. It would be really nice if I were able to – if I could pull up some, I don't know, maybe the newer NVivo allows you to do this, but where you can pull up kind of a web so you could see – 'all right, this is the website printout that I've got and these are all the Tweets that are linked to it and they are linked to these other ones or linked this way', so I could see it. NVivo currently acts like – I used to do everything with post-its, coding with post-its and NVivo makes it so you don't have to code with post-its, you can pull out – it actually copies and pastes everything that has to do with this argument. That's that, great. But I'd like to also see how they are networked and how they are connected, would be more interesting.

# I: So what can't you do at the minute in terms of getting social media data, analysing it, storing it?

F: Yeah, I'd like to be able see the – visualise the web, see how things are connected to each other. So if I pop in one thing and something is highlighted, I can pop over to something else but be able to visualise it a little bit better.

# I: So do you add any other data other than what you've already discussed? You've got their website posts and all the comments…

F: I've got their website posts, I will have their Tweets and I've got some of the interviews and I'll have the interviews transcribed. Oh, I've also got pictures, on a lot of their website posts there was separate pictures so those are in there as illustration and number of their Tweets (this is something I'm not sure where I'm going to go with this), a lot of their commentary – this is what made them very good is they would respond to political things by making jokes, making (*00:19:53 meams*) which then would go viral. So they were incredibly fast. A politician would make an ass of themselves and they would have a meam up in five minutes mocking them – everybody knew! it would be nice if it was possible to put a couple of tags on a picture and then it would pop up where you were analysing everything else under that theme.

# I: Do you want to know more information about the people who have re-tweeted or commented, so like when you store someone's Tweet and you know that someone else Tweeted it, you only have, say, their username, do you want more about the person who is…?

F: It would be really interesting to be able to then follow the Tweet, yeah, actually now that I think about it that would be very useful. If we had a tool that was similar to NVivo that could then link up to so you would enter- that would be nice, if that was one of the things that we could load into NVivo or something similar to NVivo or a plug-in to NVivo that lets you use the social media so you could say, all right, this is a Tweet, so it would have a picture of the Tweet but then keep all of the analytical data so you could go back to the Tweet to everybody who has re-tweeted and everything like that, later. That would be….because at the moment what I'm doing is I'm having to specifically copy and paste each one of the comments that are responses and things like this. But if you could go back to how it linked back to the web page, I'm not sure if NVivo does that.

# I: Does it concern you that the likes of Twitter or these websites that you are saying you are taking copies of them, for now, but in theory…

F: They might have changed them.

# I: They might have changed them or, in theory, in six months – Twitter might no longer exist. I know that's not going to happen but they might remove the website completely, does that concern you?

F: That is something that concerns me, people will edit their Twitter profile or will go through it – and I know that this happens – somebody will suddenly become famous or somebody else will find some of their old Tweets, they go through and this is something that's happened a number of times when (PCC) find out suddenly 'Crap, everybody is looking at my Twitter history to find out what kind of a person I am.' And they see this and they go silent and they go private for about forty-eight hours and come back with an almost empty Twitter history. And I was worried about that one when talking to National Collective, but whether they had gone and cleaned their Twitter history or anything, I chatted with them and they were like, 'no', they are happy with everything they put up there, they stand by everything that was put up there. So maybe that he's liked to me and they did erase something, I've erased things. Because you put something up there while you've had a couple of beers and then you go back and you are like – I spelled something wrong or it makes me sound like an asshole and you erase it and then nobody can find it again unless they've taken a screenshot. So yeah, there is that. Variable – whether it's permanent or not.

# I: So almost you want a snapshot to show what it was when *(you*) were using it and a link to go back to what it is now.

F: That would be good. Yeah, the snap – that is kind of my idea; so we've got the download of the Tweets but then a link back to where it is now. It would be very interesting if there were an alert if there was a change to it. You know, a little…not something that sends me an email or something that pops up but maybe something that pops up next to it, a little red or green thing that says that it's been edited since the time that it was originally snapped. You could snap it in April, you download the Tweet directly and you get all of that information and then you know has the Tweet itself been deleted or have people added on to it or something, that would be…

# I: The next question is what would you like to be able to do with social media and other data, do you want to be able to combine them together or do you want to be able to pull in information from other sources?

F: Well you see, the idea of social media is – it's problematic (*in itself)* which is something…it's something that I'm trying to deal with, how we should be classifying social media. And people just say 'social media', well you know – what do you mean by 'social media'? Because I got into an int3eresting little argument with – 'actually, I'll show up on the thing' getting into an argument about their definition of social media because it was not actually proper things that they were saying because they were saying something about the (earth spring) and it's incorrect, that's something that….yeah, as the researcher you're supposed to stay out of it! I really needed to correct that. So there are things that people call 'social media' but everybody has got a slightly different description about what social media is. And I don't like it because you could end up with these surveys where they are like, 'well, do you use Facebook, do you use Twitter?' 'Do you use Facebook for this? Do you use Facebook for that, for this, for this? Do you use Twitter for every one of those things, do you use Skype for every one of those, do you use Snapshot for all of these?' Well let's stop naming the particular companies and maybe look more at how…you are not allowed to use this for your research because I'm going to…don’t use my idea!

# I: Not at this point!

F: This is my paper idea!

# I: No, no!

F: But the more I talk about it, the more I figure it out in my head. But it's to look at how people are using social media in the same way they used old media. And the same way people did before they had media when they had letters and…

# I: When people ask me what is social media, you are a bit like 'eh, well…uh…'

F: Or SMS social media. Yeah. Is instant messenger social media, is Skype? Is Skype social media?

# I: Is an old blog still a blog, social media now?

F: Exactly, is a website – is a website with comments social media? That's where they were organising things, because once the police figures out Facebook they were staking out Facebook and they would organise something on Facebook but everybody else knew they'd get a clue over on the comments section about how or what was…so they'd make the organisation on Facebook and send the police one place and the actual clue was somewhere else and everybody else would have the protest somewhere else., that is where you are going to find the activism. If you ever went down there.

# I: Things like the BBC just never switch comments on on the..,.

F: They turned off the comments a couple of years ago, they used to have political, political comments are open, political comments are open but political comments were turned off! And they will occasionally allow them on and they are heavily watched. The Guardian's aren't as heavily watched. And so it's free, a free newspaper so a lot of people will be on there discussing things. And they sit there and they talk about events and they recruit people for different groups and mainly amongst the supporters, that was – I couldn't bring that into my thing but that's where I got to a number of other blogs that I ended up following. And they all interact with each other, they have different perspectives and some of them don't like each other and some of them do like each other and they've all got these different perspectives and this big range of blogs but they discuss things with each other on each other's comments sections and then got pulled in there.

# I: So I think you've already answered some of this already but if you had a dream research tool for helping with social media research, what would it do?

F: It would be something similar to NVivo but what we just came up with would actually be – if we could link it back to the sources, easily link it back to the sources and just keep it updated so that you knew when something changed. So you could see, you could then see in progression how it changed.

# I: And would you like – the way you were describing earlier about being able to visualise how it all connected with other different..?

F: yes, making it so you could visualise how it connected, something that doesn't take up nearly as much room as NVivo. Does it do that where it shuts down your computer for a while, while it does its saving?

# I: My computer is not very good in general.

F: Even my new computer, it sometimes just sits there and grinds away trying to do it and NVivo has to be saved every five minutes and it stops suddenly. It's a huge -they are just huge data files. I've had a number of problems with the huge data files in NVivo, not entirely sure that they actually need that much. Something that could be smaller, you don't need the autocode, you don't need a lot of the trinkets and bells and whistles they've got in NVivo, if they just made something where you could link code in, like things and then link them back to where things were available online, would be easier.

# I: Ok, that's pretty much everything. I don't know if you've got anything else you want to add?

F: No, I think that's it.

END