



# QUANTIFYING QUALITATIVE DATA

Using Technology to Find the Signal in the Noise

APR  
2022

# QUAL IS...



Directional  
Preliminary  
Exploratory  
Soft  
Interpretive  
Preparatory  
Illustrative  
Supporting  
Mushy

It's just qualitative



# CHALLENGES TO QUAL'S CREDIBILITY

**Trust in numbers**

**Fear of error**



# TRUST IN NUMBERS



*The appeal of numbers is especially compelling to bureaucratic officials who lack the mandate of a popular election, or divine right. Arbitrariness and bias are the most usual grounds upon which such officials are criticized. **A decision made by the numbers... has at least the appearance of being fair and impersonal.** Scientific objectivity thus provides an answer to a moral demand for impartiality and fairness. **Quantification is a way of making decisions without seeming to decide. Objectivity lends authority to officials who have very little of their own.***

Theodore M. Porter

“Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity  
in Science and Public Life”



# FEAR OF ERROR

Representation  
error  
Interpretation error



# FEAR OF ERROR



*Groups can go in all sorts of directions, depending in part on factors that should be irrelevant. Who speaks first, who speaks last, who speaks with confidence, who is wearing black, who is seated next to whom, who smiles or frowns or gestures at the right moment – all these factors, and many more, affect outcomes.*

Daniel Kahneman et al

“Noise: A Flaw in Human Judgment”



# WHAT NOW?

How do we **raise the credibility** of qualitative research in a world that favors quantification and when many of our traditional approaches are noisy?

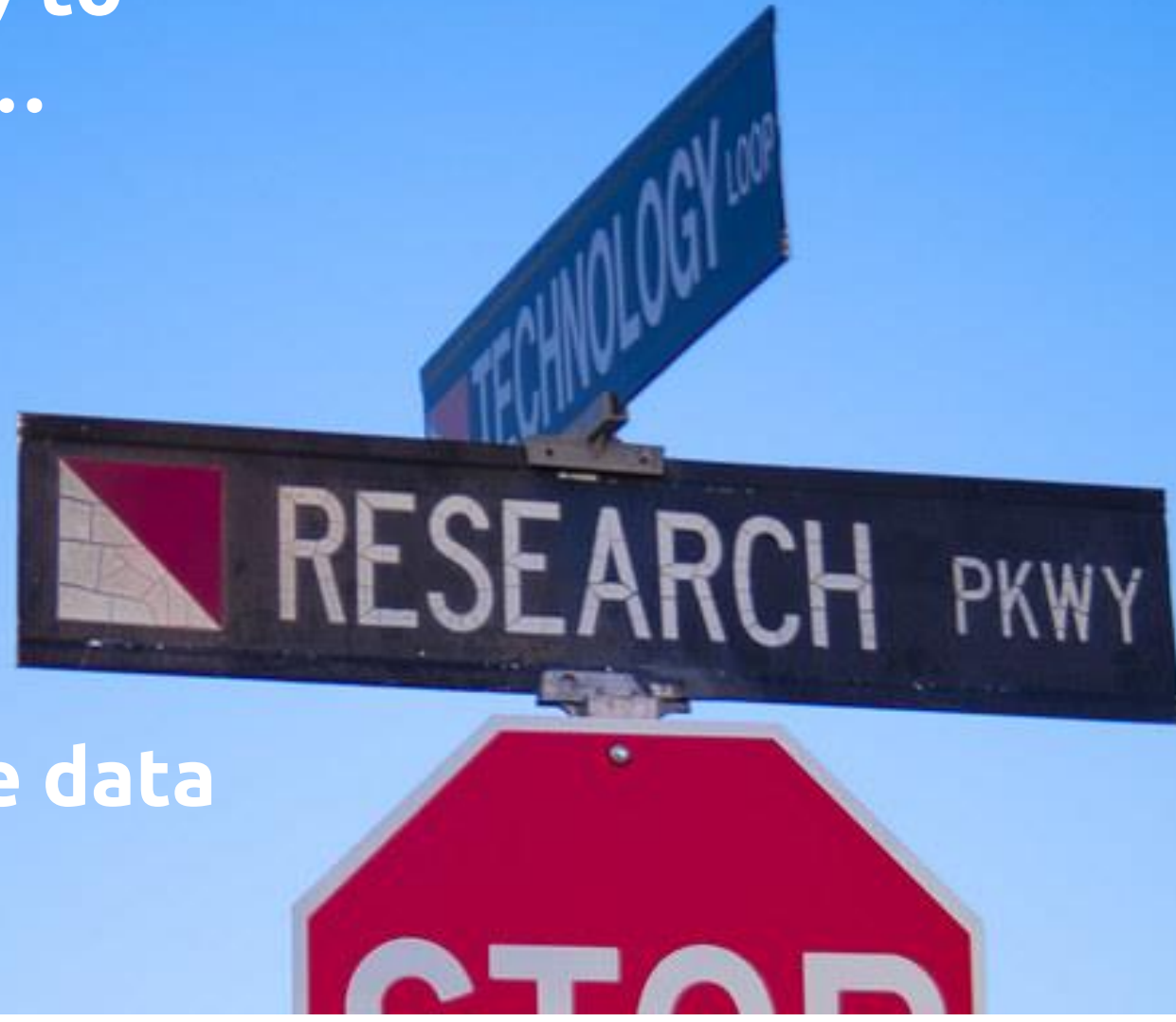


# QUAL 2.0

Use Technology to  
modernize the...

- Collection
- Analysis
- Visualization

...of qualitative data





# DATA COLLECTION



*Independence is a prerequisite for the wisdom of crowds... While multiple independent opinions, properly aggregated, can be strikingly accurate, even a little social influence can produce a kind of herding that undermines the wisdom of crowds.*

Daniel Kahneman et al

“Noise: A Flaw in Human Judgment”



# DATA ANALYSIS

**Combining Human Intelligence  
and Artificial Intelligence**





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