



VIDEO ETHNOGRAPHY

WHAT IS VIDEO ETHNOGRAPHY?

Traditional market research reporting can be one-dimensional, limited to presenting study findings as text, numbers, graphs, and charts, often failing to communicate the heart of consumer experience. Video Ethnography is an additional, powerful tool that makes “flat” messages more multi-dimensional and brings research subjects to life.

Video Ethnography is akin to documentary storytelling as it enhances observational understanding with its nuances of tone, gaze, and energetic investment. It’s more than audio, visual imaging, or words – video is all of these, presented simultaneously in a visual narrative.

In general, a successful Video Ethnography:

1. Provides an understanding of the subjects’ lives
2. Integrates physical context as a part of the narrative
3. Reveals subjects’ behavioral patterns and emotions

ADVANTAGES OF VIDEO ETHNOGRAPHY

Video Ethnography is a powerful complement to written analysis. Written content attempts to represent a thought or event with authenticity but is limited by the author’s subjectivity, consciously or not. Video also functions to highlight affect, leveraging the portrayal of emotions to accentuate ideas.

Video Ethnography	Written Reporting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad reach • Easily digested • Thematic overview • Easily conveys emotion • No prior knowledge required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited reach • Requires time commitment • Comprehensive examination • Limited emotional range • Jargon, theory, strategy • Background sometimes needed

TYPES OF VIDEO REPORTING

Not all videos are created equal. Ultimately, there are several “styles” of video ethnography:

Chronological: Follows a linear narrative, telling a story as it unfolds over time

Analogous: Provides a direct, literal interpretation of the written report

Participant-based: Focuses on the responses and insights gained from each participant with little or no reference to other respondents

Thematic Overview: Provides background and insight on a number of themes that emerge from the research

Deep-dive: Focuses on one key theme while leaving the rest to be explained in the written report

Agenda-supporting: Montage or fast-paced editing supports a particular agenda, aimed at convincing internal audiences of a specific need

These approaches can also be combined to create hybrid types of video ethnography deliverables.

WHY USE VIDEO ETHNOGRAPHY?

Society has prepared us for consuming messages quickly and receiving information more passively, in ever-more dynamic and compelling formats. It’s just a fact that people gravitate toward moving imagery.



Messages can be fast, energetic, and exciting with video.



Video often ‘sticks’ and is more easily rooted in our memories longer than other media.



If a picture says 1,000 words, a video tells a more complete story.

