

Procedure to Anonymise data in Microsoft Word

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This procedure was used for anonymising the GROWING UP ON THE STREETS dataset – around 2600 interviews in all. It could be adapted for other smaller data sets. A-RA2 is an example participant code (Accra research assistant 2) but could be replaced with a name or pseudonym. It is far easier to anonymise in Word than NVivo.

1. In File Manager, beginning with the earliest interview, (checking against Fieldwork/ interview Log in Excel if you have one), put the interviews into system-recognisable chronological order by adding 001, 002, etc. up to e.g. 120 or however many interviews/focus groups etc. there are. While doing so, make file name style consistent (e.g. 001 A-RA2 8 July 2014). On completion check there are no duplicate numbers.
2. Create a new Word document for each RA, e.g. 'ALL A-RA2 interviews'. Create a running header (e.g. GROWING UP ON THE STREETS · ANONYMISED DATA · INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH A-RA2 · APRIL 2019) and add page numbers at the bottom. Make the margins Narrow and use Calibri font 11pt with Opt spacing after para breaks. Single para break between interviews. (Remember I was dealing with a lot of pages!)
3. Open a separate Word document, click the Insert Tab, in the Text section click on the arrow next to 'Object', select 'Text from File', in the dialogue box open the relevant 'All Interviews' folder and select interviews 001 to 020 (20 files maximum). This will then paste them in numerical order into the file. Repeat until all interviews are in the Word document. Select all and paste into your e.g. 'ALL A-RA2 interviews' file, using the right hand paste option so it's in the correct style. (You could paste directly in to the file I just find this easier re formatting). Note: Word can handle docs up to c. 2000 pages so I used one doc per research assistant; smaller data sets could have all interviews in one doc).
4. Do a search for each month (e.g. 'December' will bring up all the interview headings of that month across years); make each interview title uniform in style (e.g. A-RA2 8 July 2014) and put into Heading style 1 (or 2 or 3) enabling use in an automatic contents list.
5. Create a content list: Reference Tab / Table of Content / Automatic Table 1. Update this as you go along and every so often: click or hover on the Contents title until 'Update Table' appears; select 'update entire table' if added new content or 'update pagination'

if formatting has changed the pagination (see pic below). Save the doc with another file name before going on to anonymise the data (just in case you need to refer back).

6. Referring to your list of names and allocated pseudonyms (see pic, real names column removed), scroll through interviews and/or do a search and replace for names and variants (e.g. nicknames) for all participants who may be mentioned. Do a spell check if your file is not too large (mine always is) or use Multiple Page view (in the View tab) to pick up any missed names, errors or formatting issues.
7. Copy and paste the Pseudonyms to a new Excel sheet so you can sort by gender and A-Z and put into new Female Participants and Male Participants columns. Copy and paste into the front of the Word doc with the Heading style 1 'List of Pseudonyms' so it appears on the Contents list, which you should update (see third pic below).

Part of A-RA2's pseudonym list:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	RA Group	F	M	Pseudonym	Features In	Features In	Features In
2	A-RA2	1	0	Audrey			
3	A-RA2	1	0	Thomastine [died Jan 2014]			
4	A-RA2	0	1	Andrew [Josephine's son]			
5	A-RA2	1	0	Adzo	A-RA4	A-RA5	
6	A-RA2	1	0	Yasmin	A-RA5		
7	A-RA2	0	1	Deladem [Araba's eldest son]			
8	A-RA2	0	1	Jesse			
9	A-RA2	0	1	Kwakye	A-RA4		
10	A-RA2	1	0	Amavi	A-RA5		
11	A-RA2	1	0	Sarai			
12	A-RA2	1	0	Fulera	A-RA3	A-RA4	A-RA5
13	A-RA2	0	1	Charles	A-RA4		
14	A-RA2	0	1	Branson [Susu collector and Senior man]	A-RA8		
15	A-RA2	1	0	Zina	A-RA4	A-RA5	
16	A-RA2	1	0	Abrahamina			
17	A-RA2	1	0	Akanzia			
18	A-RA2	0	1	Tobias [brother of Elolo]	A-RA3	A-RA4	A-RA5
19	A-RA2	0	1	Asamoah	A-RA3	A-RA4	A-RA5

