

## What is it?

This term, also dubbed F2FoIP at GfK NOP, borrows from the acronym VoIP (Voice over IP) often used for internet telephony services. 'Face to Face' reflects the fact that video calls are used.

This technique uses existing technologies widely available to consumers – Skype, Windows Live, Yahoo etc – to conduct face to face interviews over the internet via webcam and microphone. This is combined with screen capture recording, at the researcher's end of the call, to create a record of the interview which is independent of which technology the participant uses.

The components are not new, but the innovation lies in making sure that the services work, with good quality robust connections, through company networks, firewalls and other configuration issues. Successful use of the technique requires a realistic appraisal of the technology and expertise required at the participant's end, identifying viable samples on this basis, and developing techniques which support the participant and make the most of the medium.

## How do you use it for research?

Subject to the recruitment of participants with the equipment and knowledge to take part, F2FoIP can be used for any context in which mutual visibility adds something over and above voice telephony.

The benefits are a trade off between the costs of 'real world' face to face interviews and the limitations of

a video connection. There is likely to be more engagement between people who can see each other; body language is visible, and visual cues help to create a more natural flow of conversation compared to a voice call. Like a telephone depth interview, F2FoIP gives access to participants who may be too widely dispersed to support face to face contact, or who may not be prepared to give up travelling time. They are also in their familiar environment and likely to be at their ease.

The output from a recorded F2FoIP session may be raw material for analysis, but may also be used in reporting to bring home critical points.

In some study types, such as online service usability, the experience of having a user talk straight back at you 'through the screen' can add striking impact to stakeholder communications.

## What does GfK NOP offer?

F2FoIP is part of the range of offerings from our specialist Film Works unit. They work with researchers and social media experts to add a F2FoIP component to studies and to advise on when this will be most effective.



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