Case Study – NVivo

Client:

Various qualitative researchers.

Project:

We have been approached by many clients recently who use the NVivo qualitative data analysis computer software package. NVivo helps qualitative researchers to organize, analyse and find insights in unstructured or qualitative data like interviews where deep levels of analysis on small or large volumes of data are required. Audio and video files of interviews can be uploaded directly into NVivo, but using PDF, Word or Excel documents in NVivo can be more cost effective. Clients have approached us asking for audio and video interviews to be transcribed into documents that are compatible with NVivo.

Challenges:

There were two main challenges that came with these requests. Firstly, whilst PDF, Word and Excel documents are compatible with NVivo, we have discovered from our dealings with clients that the results are very inconsistent. We have been contacted many times because researchers have had interviews transcribed (either by us or other firms) ready to upload into NVivo only to find that the software has failed to analyse the document properly. At other times the process has gone smoothly and documents have been uploaded and analysed perfectly. Secondly, the people contacting us were never quite sure why the documents they had attempted to analyse had failed. So, for example, we would have one researcher asking us to transcribe an interview and say that it needed to be in the table form to work and another would say the complete opposite. The results were so inconsistent that when a new client would contact us asking for a transcription for the specific purpose of using with NVivo, we felt unable to give any kinds of guarantees and had to warn them that the process was fraught with difficulties. However, the number of clients contacting us and mentioning NVivo was steadily increasing as research budgets were being squeezed and researchers had to find efficient ways to analyse interviews with limited time and resources.

Solutions:

We decided that we needed to be able to offer a service where we could guarantee that a transcription would be compatible with NVivo and therefore needed to get to the bottom of the problem and work out why certain files would work well with NVivo and other very similar documents would not work well at all. We discussed the matter with an established client who uses our transcription services regularly – sometimes for NVivo analysis and sometimes not. We agreed to work together to try to resolve the problems and see if we could come up with a format that would be consistently compatible with NVivo. The only way we could do this was by very basic trial and error. We produced a transcription of an interview in Word that did not work well with NVivo and with a lot of "toing and froing" and a lot of tweaking of formatting and use of headings within the document, we finally managed to come up with a document that worked very well with NVivo. We then tested this by transcribing a number of other interviews and producing them in Word with the same formatting and use of headings until we were satisfied that we had come up with a formula for a 100% NVivo friendly transcription that would upload easily and quickly and would be analysed successfully.

Outcome:

We are now able to offer this service to qualitative researchers along with guarantees that the transcript they receive will be fully compatible with NVivo software.

Summary:

- Qualitative researchers asking for us to transcribe interviews for the purpose of analysing with NVivo data analysis software.

- Some transcripts work well with Nvivo and others not well at all.

- Researchers do not know why one document works well and another does not.

- Discussed with a regular client who is a qualitative researcher and sometimes uses NVivo.

- Got agreement to go through a process with said client to investigate the compatibility issues and attempt to find a solution.

- After much trial and error we finally found solutions to these issues and the key to producing transcriptions of interviews in Word that would work consistently well with NVivo.

- We are now able to offer transcription of interviews specifically for use with NVivo and give the necessary guarantees that the product will be fully compatible with the software.

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