



The use of online synchronous interviews as a data collection technique

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The viability of the use of Internet Relay Chat (IRC) clients (e.g. Skype and MSN) to conduct online synchronous interviews is debatable due to the limitations inherent in computer-mediated communication. This data collection technique was utilized in the researcher's master's thesis project, which had explored the concepts of trust and risk in the online hospitality network, The CouchSurfing Project. Semi-structured interviews were conducted over Skype and MSN with respondents from five different countries. Various challenges and benefits of IRC were experienced by the researcher and the respondents. However, in the opinion of the researcher, it was found that the advantages had outweighed the disadvantages due to the circumstances of the thesis project.

Key words: online synchronous interviews, IRC