

# NATURE AND PURPOSES OF RESEARCH

## INTRODUCTION

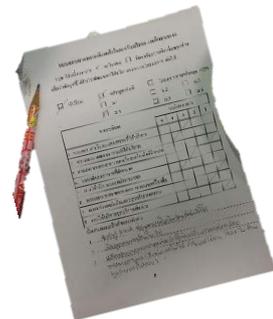
When it comes to creating a media production, the first thing to be done will usually be research. Research is essential to not only creating an effective media product, but also to creating practically any informed work in any sector. If you want your product to mean something to your audience, you're going to have to research what they like and what they're going to want in your product. Otherwise, you'll be left making random guesses as to their interests, leaving you potentially making massive mistakes in what you include in your production. This applies to creating a media production as well, of course.

But how would you go about researching any topic? What kinds of research are there for you to consider? And what different methods of researching can you use in order to obtain your information?

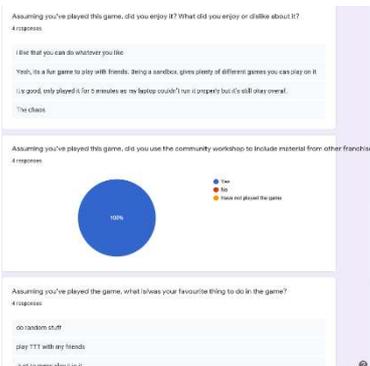
## PRIMARY

The first kind of research that you'll most likely hear about in any kind of industry will be primary research. Primary research is the opposite of secondary research, and mainly consists of obtaining your information from a primary source. This means that you have obtained the research by yourself through your own research methods, whether this be going up to somebody and asking for their opinion or sending out a questionnaire to a group of people to gauge their wants and needs. There are many ways to go about doing primary research, with just a few of the methods including:

- Questionnaires (whether done online or in person)
- Interviews
- Observations
- Photographic Proof
- Participating in any kind of online forum (asking for opinions, etc.)
- Focus Groups



This definition of primary research can be backed up by a direct quote from the website Oxfordreference.com, a website known for giving quick references and definitions for a variety of terms fresh from the professionals themselves (oxford university). When looking at the term 'primary research', Oxford Reference defines it as "Techniques of original data collection or research direct from the target respondents." This quote implies that primary research is a method of data collection that you obtain directly from the people you're wishing to get information from, hence confirming my written definition.



When it comes to my own experience with primary research, I've had to do quite a bit in not just my college classes for TV and Film, but also my college classes for other subjects and even some of my high school classes. For TV and Film specifically, I've had limited options due to not having anyone to send surveys/questionnaires to, but I did interview my family members and friends to ask them what they'd find interesting in a certain genre of film in order to get information. Similarly, I've done interviews like this for other subjects too, including Games Development and my Extended Project Qualification in Year one. The only visual example I have available is a questionnaire written for Games Development regarding information for a game I was researching shown above.

There are plenty of examples of primary research that could be conducted within the professional film industry, including but not limited to:

- Questionnaires to gauge opinions on genres/screenplays, as mentioned above
- Interviews in order to see what people think directly rather than a broad opinion from a survey
- Observations to see what people’s film tastes are for yourself and/or to see what other films have done differently/similarly.



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## SECONDARY

The next kind of research, and the opposite of primary research is Secondary Research. As you can expect, secondary research is research that you have not conducted yourself. Rather than obtaining the information through your own methods, you’ve gotten it through looking at results from the research of others. Typically, the only real ‘method’ of secondary research that can be done is simply reading through sources, but it’s the sources themselves that vary, including:

- Books
- Magazines
- Websites
- Films
- Audio
- Journals
- Ratings
- Statistics



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This definition (and therefore, these examples) can be backed up by a quote from Wikipedia (as well as Oxford reference, but I’d like to use a variety of sources). When looking at the Wikipedia page for Secondary research, it is defined as “the summary, collation and/or synthesis of existing research.” Therefore, we can take this to mean that secondary research is the act of collecting up a combination of research that has already been done in order to get information, hence research from someone else rather than yourself.

I’ve done a lot of secondary research myself over the years I’ve been in education, with quite a bit of it being done in TV & Film, including researching typical tropes in certain film genres to see what I should/shouldn’t include, what genres are popular and what genres aren’t as successful anymore, what the definitions are for certain terms, people’s opinions on a film, etc. A big, recent example is my research for job roles in the film industry done from ScreenSkills, a website collating these various job roles.



Some examples of secondary research within the professional

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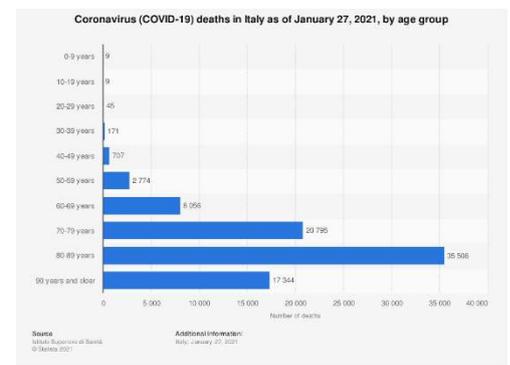
## A COMPARISON

In quite a few situations, you'll have to try and make the decision between either employing primary research or secondary research in order to obtain information about a certain topic. The question is which type of research is better, and which should you use? Primary research gives you more relevant information to what you're researching, as you get to ask your target audience directly and avoid false information. Secondary Research has the risk of information that's been falsified or with generally wrong results in order to portray a certain viewpoint. However, secondary research is far easier to obtain and very widespread over the internet, only requiring you to read a source rather than gather information yourself like Primary research requires.

Therefore, I don't believe that either of the kinds of research are more useful than the other. I believe that whether you use one or the other (or both) depends on your available resources and what you are researching, leaving them both useful in different situations (and sometimes both useful in the same situation). For example, you'd be better off doing primary research in a situation where you have the capabilities to research something yourself in order to get information directly from your source whereas you'd be better off doing secondary research if what you're attempting to conduct is not feasibly possible (i.e. location barrier, language barrier, etc.)

## QUANTITATIVE

There are more types of research than just primary and secondary, however. There's also quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research is any kind of research that is numerical and inherently based on facts. This kind of research will normally be displayed using graphs but can be done in other methods as well. Quantitative research is statistical, and therefore typically used in order to get a sense of how much of something will happen. For example, in a situation where you must research the amount of sales made by a specific film company/film, that would be considered quantitative research. This is backed up by a quote from Oxford Reference, who say that quantitative research is "researched based upon the generation of numerical and statistical data."



I've had to do some quantitative data in the past, primarily during the production of my Coronavirus documentary where I had to do some research into the effects and statistics around Coronavirus at the time, including infection statistics and who was most at risk. Looking at numbers of people infected and numbers of deaths in different countries would count as quantitative research under the parameters listed earlier.

Some specific examples of Quantitative research that you'd perform in the TV/Film industry would include:

- Researching sales of specific genres
- Researching review scores of movies with certain plotlines
- Researching net worth of certain actors/actresses
- Looking at sales of previous movies to see what they did right

## QUALITATIVE

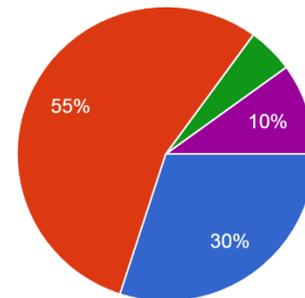
The counterpart to Quantitative research is Qualitative. Just as quantitative research is based inherently on statistics and numerical values, qualitative research typically focuses on the opposites; non-statistical information or opinionated information. This kind of research can be displayed in a wider variety of ways than quantitative research, such as completed questionnaires, film reviews, etc. This kind of research would typically be used in order to gauge how something is doing. This is backed up by a quote from Wikipedia, which states that "qualitative research relies on unstructured and non-numerical data."

I have personally had to conduct quite a bit of qualitative data in the past over all of my various subjects throughout college, although primarily for TV & Film work as well as games development lessons. For TV & Film, I've had to do several questionnaires asking participants about my screenplay with the majority of the questions asking about their opinions or categorial data such as gender, location, etc. Meanwhile, for games development, I've had to also do quite a few questionnaires about various games such as Garry's Mod, asking similarly categoric questions like gender as well as opinions on various parts of the game.

A more specific example of qualitative data that I've conducted in the past would have to be my most recent questionnaire done for TV & Film, where I asked my participants about their opinions on my screenplay idea as well as their opinions on various film genres, including fantasy. Within the questionnaire, the majority of the questions that I asked were qualitative due to the categorial nature of the questions, such as asking my participants their genders, locations and occupations. All of these questions involve data that is not numerical or statistical in any way, therefore being qualitative in nature.

What gender do you identify as?

20 responses



Some examples of qualitative research that you'd conduct in the professional film industry can include the following:

- Researching the social classes of your target demographic
- Researching the gender majority of who enjoys your targetted genre
- Researching how location affects what people are interested in seeing within a film
- Researching the opinions of a specific demographic on your film genre

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## A COMPARISON

Quite similarly to the comparison between primary and secondary research, it can be hard to decide whether or not you should use qualitative or quantitative research as they both have various uses throughout a variety of industries in the world, definitely including the film industry. Quantitative research can give you the information you require that focuses on cold hard facts and statistical data, allowing you to learn just how much of something is happening, like how many sales films in your genre are achieving. On the other hand, qualitative research gives you the opinionated information that can be critical in figuring out what demographic to target your film/TV show at, as various demographics enjoy various things. You'll be unable to figure out which demographic will enjoy your proposed screenplay if you can't research what each demographic enjoys. Qualitative data can't give you cold stats and facts, while quantitative data can't give you the opinions of the people that you need. They both have advantages over each-other that the other can't achieve.

With all this in mind, I personally think that neither qualitative or quantitative research have any massive benefits over each other, and instead depend on the context of what you need to research. If you're attempting to research the success of how well something did, use quantitative research to learn the sales of that genre/film/tv show. If you need to see what 40-year-old women think of the fantasy genre, you'll use qualitative research. It's all based on what you need to research.

## DATA GATHERING AGENCIES

With all these various methods and types of research, it's no surprise that there are entire agencies and companies dedicated to gathering data and research from audiences across the globe, figuring out ratings of various television programs/films and determining just what people think. These companies are known as data gathering agencies. While data gathering agencies aren't expressly limited to gathering research for TV & Film ratings, quite a few are heavily focused on learning more about what the public thinks about what goes onto our screens. An example of one of these data gathering agencies is the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board, also known as BARB.

The BARB is a data gathering agency that specialises in gathering television ratings and audience appeal to television shows within the UK. It was developed in 1981 to replace the two systems that preceded it – the JICTAR which rated ITV shows and the BBC audience research. It's owned by a combination of the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5, Sky and the IPA. People can participate in the BARB's research by receiving a box which they place on top of their TV set, which will track what programmes they watch. This research is then sent to the BARB and published, allowing them to obtain plenty of primary research from audiences across the UK from a variety of homes.



Another example of a data gathering agency would be the IMDb. IMDb, also known as the Internet Movie Database, is listed on Wikipedia as "an online database of information related to films, television programs, home videos, video games and streaming content online". Originally, IMDb was quite different to the BARB in the sense that it was run entirely by fans of the film industry, who would gather data about ratings, cast and crew for a variety of films

and TV shows and collate it all onto the website. However, the database is now run by IMDb Inc, which is a subsidiary of Amazon. IMDb has information about a much wider range of media than the BARB, including film and TV. Furthermore, the IMDb also has information about the cast and crew for the various movies, unlike the BARB which just talks about the ratings and watching habits of households across the UK.

## AUDIENCE & MARKET RESEARCH

There are more kinds of research than just primary, secondary, qualitative and quantitative. There are three more types of research, relating more directly to the business side of the film and TV industry rather than the information side like the other types.

The first of these three types of research is Market Research. Within most industries, market research can be defined as a set of techniques that are used in order to gain information about a specific market. This is not looking into your demographic, but rather into what market you're trying to get into. Market Research will allow you to learn more about the specific market you're interested in (e.g. the film industry, toy market, etc.) and what you should be aiming for in order to obtain a larger audience and to sell more of your product. This kind of research can be used for a variety of intentions, such as to design better products, improve the experience for the users or create a message for your desired audience that will attract more people to your product. This can be backed up by a quote from the Investopedia, stating that market research "allows a company to discover the target market and get opinions and other feedback from consumers about their interest in the product/service."

The second of these types of research would be Audience Research. Audience Research is research done into the habits/interests of your target audience, allowing you/a business to learn more about specifically what your target audience is actually interested in. If you don't know what your audience is wanting in a film, you're not going to be able to get them interested in your production. This doesn't have to just be targeted at your own audiences, however; you could target audience research at the audiences of your competitors, allowing you to capture their attention as well and steal from the competition. This research is mainly used to allow a company to understand the audience that they're making products for, allowing them to more closely refine their products specially for that demographic, making the product more desirable to said demographic. This can be backed up by a quote from the Learning Hub, which states that audience research involves "researching your audience or target audience to determine their pain points, preferred keywords, buying behaviours and more."



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Due to primarily doing creative subjects such as games development, photography and TV/Film, I haven't had many chances to conduct any market research myself as I've usually focused more on the audience research side of things. However, I believe that I have conducted some small portions of market research during the research for my screenplay, where I researched into the success behind the Harry Potter franchise. For this research, I looked into the market for the fantasy genre of films, seeing just how well they had done in the past by looking at the success of

previous films, therefore producing market research.

In terms of audience research, I've conducted a lot more of this throughout my work at the college. I've had to do quite a bit of audience research for TV & Film, where I'd look into the interests of my target audience based on a combination of primary and secondary research, in order to see what their interests were for my film and what I should therefore include within my film to attract them further. Furthermore, I've done similar audience research in several of my Games Development assignments where I'd research into the target audience for a game/genre of games in order to see what their interests were and how I could grab their attention for the game I was researching (in this example, I was researching garry's mod and the audience of the sandbox genre of games).

There are quite a few examples of audience and market research that could be conducted in the professional film industry. These examples include:

- Researching into the interests of your audience in order to determine how to gain their interest through your production – Audience Research
- Researching how well certain genres are doing in the box office in order to determine whether or not your production is financially viable – Market Research

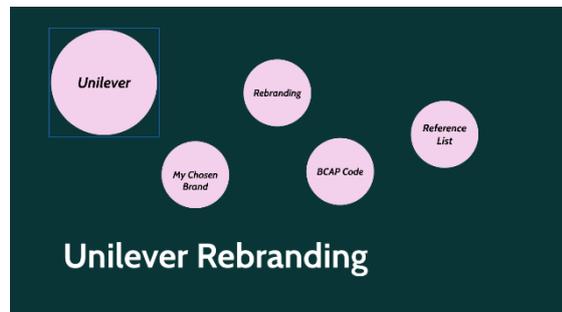


- Researching into what different audiences enjoy in order to see how you could grab the interests of non-target demographics, widening your viewerbase – Audience Research
- Researching into the success of a different market such as the toy market in order to see if you could make merchandise to attract more viewers to your film – Market Research

## PRODUCTION RESEARCH

The final type of research to be mentioned is Production Research, sometimes known as just Product Research. Just as Market research focuses on research around the market for a product/production and Audience research focuses on research around your audience, production research focuses on any research around the actual production of your product itself. This would include things such as how the product is made, the characteristics of the production itself and what selling points can be mentioned for the product. A quote to back up this definition for Production Research comes from an essay written and displayed on Slideshare, which directly states that production research “is research to help give information on the characteristics of the product.”

I’ve done quite a bit of production research throughout two of my courses at college – Games Development and TV & Film. Within Games Development, I’ve had to do quite a bit of research into a game and its characteristics in order to determine what selling points it had that I could advertise in order to attract my target demographic, decided via audience research from earlier. For TV & Film, I’ve had to do production research for my Unilever product that I attempted to rebrand and re-advertise, in order to determine what selling points the product had that I could exploit within the advertisement to attract the brand new demographic that I was challenged with attracting.



Within the professional industry, there are plenty of examples of production research that could be done, including:

- Researching the characteristics of your film’s narrative in order to see what you can advertise on a movie poster
- Researching the physical attributes of a film release, such as blu-ray or widescreen in order to advertise those to the target audience
- Researching the characteristics of any tie-in merchandise to see how you could advertise it to the audiences that already enjoy the media

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