



Rapport at a Distance: Getting Into the Groove With Your Interviewee

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I'm a sociocultural anthropologist, working for Ford's Autonomous Vehicles (AV) Team.

My favorite methodology is participant observation.

Here are all the things I love about in-person interviews:

- **We're sharing space!**
- **I can shake the person's hand to welcome them – or we can at least bump elbows**
- **I feed off their energy so much that I can't help but be enthusiastic, smiling so much my face hurts**



Here are all the things that stress me out about in-person interviews:



- **We're sharing space**
- **I need to shake the person's hand to welcome them – or at least bump elbows**
- **I feed off their energy so much that it can be exhausting**

Contents

- What it's like to be the interviewee
- Challenges of remote interviews
- Benefits of remote interviews
- Tips & tricks
- Discussion

Imagine you're an interviewee, for an in-person interview:



- They either welcome us into their own space
 - “Do I need to **clean my house**?”
 - “What about my **co-workers**?”
- Or they need to come to our space
 - How **early** should I be there?
 - Where do I **park**?
 - What if I’m running **late**?
- They may be unsure how to present themselves
 - How am I supposed to **dress**?
 - **Why** do you want to talk to **me**?
- Maybe they’re nervous

It can feel like a job interview.

Challenges of Remote Interviews & Online Chats



- Lag
- Body language hurdles
- Environmental disturbances

Benefits of Remote Interviews & Online Chats

- Interviewees don't have to travel
- Comfortable surroundings
- Sensitive topics are easier to discuss



Prepare yourself:

- Have your **materials ready**
 - Including **visual aids**
- **Close** unnecessary programs and tabs, and turn off notifications
- Have a **bottle of water** handy
- For video interviews, **be comfortable**, physically
 - Moving around in front of a camera can be tricky

Prepare your interviewee:

- Let them know in advance exactly what they need to have ready
 - Technology
 - Artifacts
 - Props
- Ask them to avoid distractions as best they can
- Suggest that they have a beverage handy, but ask them to avoid eating (unless that's part of the interview!)
- For video interviews, let them know they should feel free to sit or stand, or even move around if needed

Getting Started

Introductions

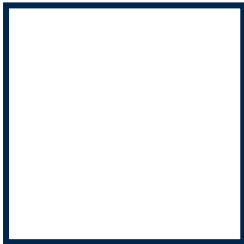


Purpose and timing

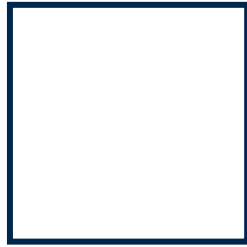
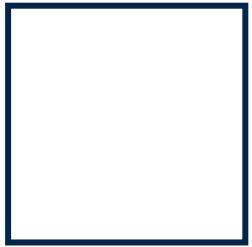
Potential technical issues



Process, including recording, notetaking



Throughout the Interview



Model as
best you can



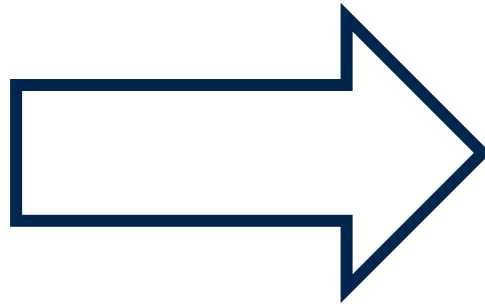
Pay attention
to lag



Be attentive
to eye
contact

Use silence
appropriately

Ultimately, mistakes and slip-ups show you're human, and contribute to authenticity and trust. Groove with it.



Discussion