



RESEARCH WITH A TWIST

Around fourteen years ago, on my daughter's first birthday, my wife gave me a kit for making balloon animals. Her thinking was that I could learn how to twist fantastic sculptures in readiness for the decade of birthday parties to follow. I would save us money by not hiring children's entertainers, and save us stress by ensuring the young partygoers were suitably occupied.

The only problem with this plan was that learning how to tie balloon animals was difficult. The diagrams and instructions that came with the kit were clear and well-written, but they couldn't convey exactly how to do the twists, folds and pinches required to make a successful sculpture.

Luckily, one thoughtful internet user in Los Angeles had posted some twisting videos on his website, www.balloon-animals.com. By watching how he created balloon dogs, pigs and monkeys, and listening to him talking through every step of the process, I learned how to create these animals myself.

Just a few weeks before I received my balloon kit, a website called YouTube hosted its first video. While my second career as a balloon-based entertainer did not stand the

test of time, YouTube has grown to be the largest video-hosting website in the world. At the end of 2018 it was serving more than five billion video views per day, and had helped some of its most prominent content-creators to become multi-millionaires. Although none of them, to my knowledge, are balloon-twisters.

Video content is now the biggest component of consumer internet traffic, so it is interesting to note that only a relatively small proportion of consumer market and marketing research data is video-based. As my newfound ability to create convincing balloon animals demonstrates, we can learn better and deeper from video. So, shouldn't we put video at the centre of more of our consumer research?

GETTING CLOSER TO REAL

Consumer insights need to be grounded in reality. Video enables us to capture real situations, language and emotions to give a more rounded, richer evaluation of consumers' experiences.

Developments in smartphone technology are helping us: increasing access to smartphone technology means that more people can create and share video, and 360° video capture is becoming more available to help us collect more information at a single point in time. Developments in society are helping us too: people's increasing familiarity and comfort with video as a social medium mean that barriers to providing feedback in this way are coming down. Overall, we have more opportunity than ever to learn about people's real lives in their real contexts – in-home, at work, at play and on the go.

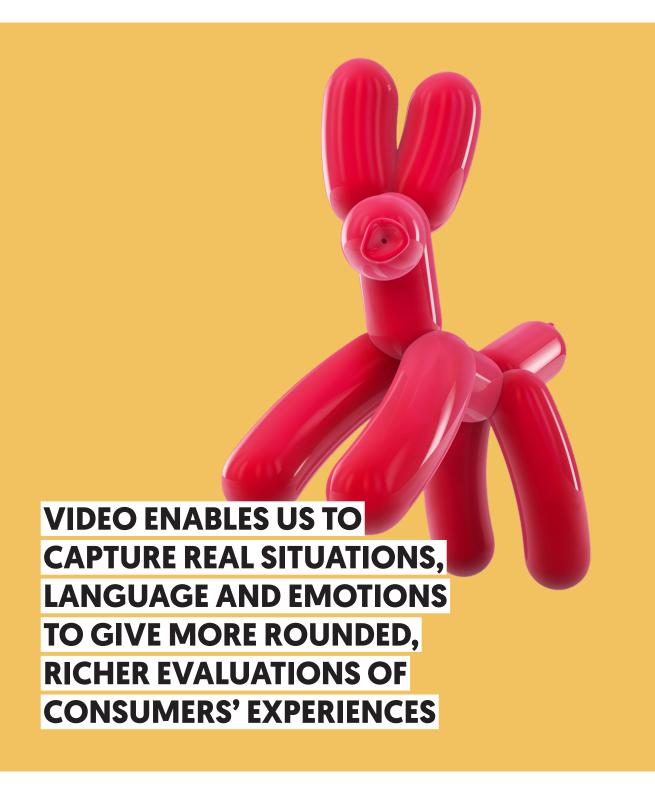
Open-ended explorations, captured by video, allow us to learn what is most meaningful and

important to consumers. What, when and how they tell us about their experiences gives us important insight into their priorities, as does what they don't say. What we see them doing, which may be counter to what they tell us, can be just as revealing. And when consumers give us feedback on their own terms, we create the opportunity to learn things that we might not have thought to explore at all.

This real, consumer-led feedback means we are more likely to shift our hypotheses about what matters to our audience, and better align our products and services with their priorities.







STRENGTH AND FLEXIBILITY

A 30-second video contains more data points than any text or scale question response. The density of video data allows us to start thinking differently about study design, scale and 'robustness'.

It is often cited that an open video response captures on average six times as many words as a self-completion text response to the same question. Our experience bears this out – in a recent test we recorded nine times as many words in our video-led product-screening study than in the subsequent validation survey.

Video does not just give a better word count. Sentiment can be discerned from the more 'natural' language used, and importance can be inferred from the order in which information is given. Affect and emotion can be captured through facial coding and voice tone analysis. Behaviours can be counted, and interactions with the stimulus can be

timed. Separately, time, date and location can be reliably and precisely gained from device data.

When used in this way, video is the data, not an add-on to 'bring the findings to life'. It moves from being solely valuable for qualitative learning, and becomes a source of rich quantitative data points as well. Video can combine the benefits of nuance and depth typically associated with qualitative data, and the scale and structure typically associated with quantitative.

When we get this quality and depth of response, we can remove a wide range of other questions and significantly reduce interview length. Plus, when we learn more from each research participant, we can feel more comfortable about speaking to fewer people. By learning more in a shorter time, and with smaller samples, video can enable more agile research designs and significantly reduce the 'time to insight'.



TWISTED TOGETHER

Used well, video responses can replace most closed-ended questions, but not all of them. The combination of data from closed and open video questions increases the potential for insight.

Headline scalar measures such as overall opinion provide a helpful anchor point for analysis. They allow an initial sorting of those that are positive or negative towards a particular stimulus, and a way of understanding whether there are broadly different reactions across a range of stimuli. They also provide a dependent variable to determine drivers of opinion from the ideas and attributes mentioned in the video responses.

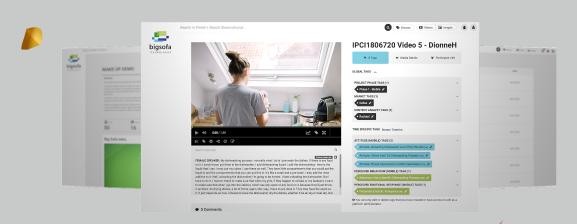
Clients will always have some key measures they know to be meaningful, as do we.

There will also be areas or attributes central to the project where it is important to get a direct read, e.g. asking about perceptions of sweetness makes sense if testing products designed to have a reduced-sugar formulation.

However, adding multiple extra questions "in case X isn't mentioned" leads to longer and more repetitive survey experiences and reduces the benefits of agility that video brings. Video can be the majority of the survey experience. We should have the confidence to let participants guide the content and learn from what they tell us, not what we think they might or should say.



THE COMBINATION OF DATA FROM CLOSED AND OPEN VIDEO QUESTIONS INCREASES THE POTENTIAL FOR INSIGHT



THE BIG REVEAL

An additional advantage of video data is the impact it brings to delivery. Research insight is all the more powerful by being obviously driven by the target audience.

Our video content management platform, powered by Big Sofa Technologies, makes it easy to explore, analyse, edit and share the data that we collect. Video (and audio and image) data is transcribed and tagged for easy identification of key language and themes across and within videos. Intuitive sorting and editing capabilities allow custom playlists to be created.

For Ipsos, this means we can extract themes and meaning from a large data set quickly and easily. Highlights from the video data can be collated and woven into reporting to emphasise key points and enhance our storytelling.

Increasingly, we are using our platform for co-learning workshop sessions – 'video excursions' – where clients and Ipsos researchers explore video together, getting closer to consumers and building hypotheses and ideas to test in subsequent qualitative and quantitative work.

Our technology also enables clients to revisit and re-mine existing video, giving value beyond the lifetime of any individual project and maximising return on investment.





STILL FEELING PUMPED

While I didn't make my millions as a twister, I can still produce a recognisable balloon monkey. The fact that I can remember how to do this many years after watching the instructional video, and recall the exact name of the website to give it a plug, demonstrates the power of video as a tool for learning and communication. For insights that will last much longer than an inflatable sculpture, it makes sense to put video at the centre of your research.

TO FIND OUT MORE

Ipsos has already used video to bring additional insight to consumers' reactions to products, customer journeys, patient experiences, creative development and many other areas across the globe. If you would like to learn more about how we can bring the power of video to your organisation, please contact us.







ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alex has more than 20 years' experience in the market research industry, and leads the development of Ipsos' product and pack testing approaches in the UK. He is no longer available for children's parties •

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- ¹ Also see: YouTube https://www.youtube.com/user/balloonanimals or Twitter https://twitter.com/mbfloyd
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNQXAC9IVRw 'Me at the zoo' was the first video uploaded to YouTube, on 23 April 2005.
- 3 https://www.youtube.com/intl/en-GB/yt/about/press/ every day people watch over a billion hours of video and generate billions of views.
- https://www.forbes.com/sites/natalierobehmed/2018/12/03/highest-paid-youtube-stars-2018-markipliei jake-paul-pewdiepie-and-more/#5b9b4144909
- 5 https://newsroom.cisco.com/press-release-content?type=webcontent&articleId=1853168 Video is forecast to represent 80% of all Internet traffic by 2021 up from 67% in 2016
- https://business.instagram.com/a/stories 500 million Instragram accounts use Instagram Stories every day, https://blog.globalwebindex.com/trends/fiktok-music-social-media/ there are 500 million active Tik Tok users worldwide, 53% uploaded a video in the last month



ABOUT IPSOS MORI

Ipsos MORI, part of the Ipsos group, is one of the UK's largest and most innovative research agencies, working for a wide range of global businesses, the FTSE100 and many government departments and public bodies.

We specialise in solving a range of challenges for our clients, whether related to business, consumers, brands or society. In the field of data science, we have a large and diverse team of experts including mathematicians, statisticians, data scientists and behavioural economists. We are constantly seeking to break new ground in the understanding and application of large and complex data sets.

We are passionately curious about people, markets, brands and society. We deliver information and analysis that makes our complex world easier and faster to navigate and inspires our clients to make smarter decisions.

