

# The Four Voices of Qualitative Data Analysis Software

International Institute for Qualitative Methodology  
Master Class Series

Dr. Kristi Jackson  
October 13, 2016

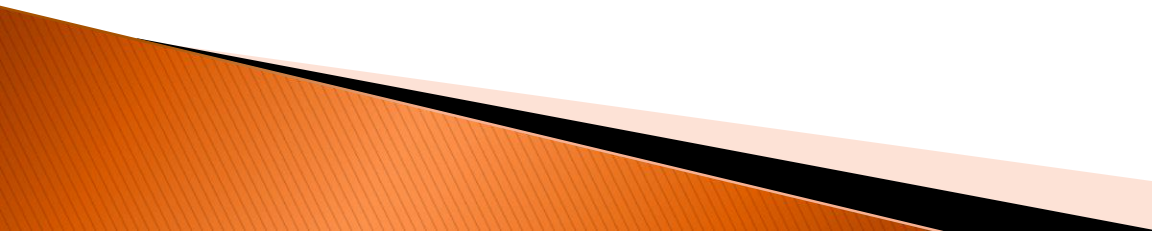
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# Presentation Overview

- ▶ Brief Orientation to Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS)
- ▶ Part 1
  - The Data
  - The Four Voices/Tropes about the relationship between QDAS and qualitative methods
- ▶ Part 2
  - The merits of one of the Tropes: The Chicken/Egg
  - Lessons from interactive digital art
  - The cure for over-tropification

# What is Qualitative Data Analysis Software?

- ▶ Assign themes or codes to particular pieces of text/audio/video/image.
  - ▶ Assign multiple codes to a single portion of text/audio/video/image.
  - ▶ Cross-reference the relationships among codes to investigate constellations or patterns.
  - ▶ Import quantitative or demographic data as a means of comparing subpopulations in the data.
  - ▶ Track researcher ideas through the use of memos and links.
  - ▶ Provide output in the form of reports and visualizations that can be used to present findings.
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# History of the role of QDAS

For more information on the history and relevance of Qualitative Data Analysis Software:

- Davidson, J. & di Gregorio, S. (2011). *Qualitative research and technology: In the midst of a revolution*. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 627–643). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Gilbert, L., Jackson, K., & di Gregorio, S. (2013). *Tools for analyzing qualitative data: The history and relevance of qualitative data analysis software*. In J. M. Spector, M. D. Merrill, J. Elen, & M. J. Bishop (Eds.), *Handbook for research on educational communications and technology* (4th ed., pp. 221–238). London: Routledge.
- Jackson, K. (2014). *Qualitative methods, transparency, and qualitative data analysis software: Toward an understanding of transparency in motion*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations. (AAT 3621346)
- Silver, C. & Lewins, A. (2014). *Using software in qualitative research: A step-by-step guide*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: Sage Publications.
- Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research: analysis types and software tools*. London: Routledge: Falmer.

# PART ONE:

- The Data
- The Four Voices/Tropes about the relationship between QDAS and qualitative methods

# Database of Literature on Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS)

- ▶ Criteria: Evaluative discussions of the role of any QDAS program in English, only. From the inception up to 2012.
- ▶ Search tactics: Using Academic Search Premier, JSTOR, ERIC, my library, Pat Bazeley's library, my network (for QDAS, CAQDAS, and 7 different programs).
- ▶ Resulting materials: Pro, con, and mixed; As little as one paragraph to as long as an entire book (roughly 150 items).
- ▶ Analytical perspectives and strategies: Descriptive coding ("lay of the land") > Constructionist > Critical Discourse Analysis.

# The Relationship Between Software and Methods: Four Voices/Tropes

- ▶ Early Bird



# The Relationship Between Software and Methods: Four Voices/Tropes

▶ Early Bird



▶ Snake Oil





# The Relationship Between Software and Methods: Four Voices/Tropes

▶ Early Bird



▶ Snake Oil



▶ Horse/Cart



# The Relationship Between Software and Methods: Four Voices/Tropes

▶ Early Bird



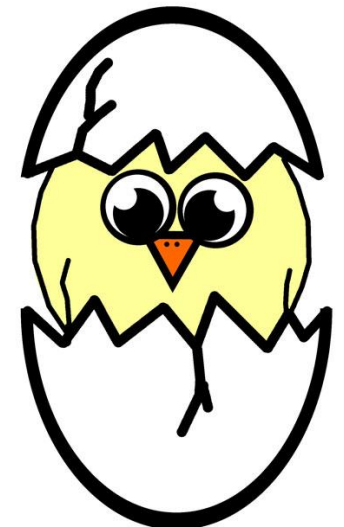
▶ Snake Oil



▶ Horse/Cart



▶ Chicken/Egg



# What is a Trope?

- ▶ A vivid or striking figure of speech which may start as a motif and turn into a cliché.
- ▶ Purpose: To add interest to the claims made so a reader is able to follow and retain information. Tropes often make material more entertaining and/or are used to persuade or make an argument.
- ▶ I focus on two types in this presentation
  - Hyperbole: Exaggeration as a rhetorical device
    - Overly simplified motif, cliché, monochromatic rendering
      - Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) will solve your problems
      - QDAS is like Hal in “A Space Odyssey” and will try to destroy you
  - Metaphor: Use of comparisons to point to particular characteristics
    - Early birds, snake oil, horse/cart, chicken/egg

# Early Bird Metaphor



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But wait . . .  
. . . . there's  
more!

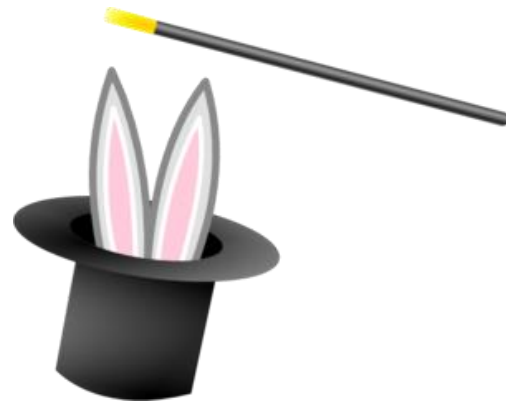
# Early Bird Hyperbole

Garcia-Horta, J. B. and Guerra-Ramos, M. T. (1998). The use of CAQDAS in educational research: some advantages, limitations and potential risks. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education* 32(2) 151–165.

▶ Quote:

- According to [Robson] (2002, 460), ‘humans as “natural analysts” have deficiencies and biases’ (459). Acknowledging these shortfalls is of great help in working to reduce possible distortions and predispositions. Table 1 presents our interpretation of these deficiencies when considered in the context of semi-structured interview studies. (p. 161)
- ▶ Twelve deficiencies, including “Information overload”, “confidence in judgment“, and “consistency”.

# Snake Oil Metaphor



# Snake Oil Hyperbole

Morison & Moir (1998). The role of computer software in the analysis of qualitative data: efficient clerk, research assistant or Trojan horse? *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 28(1) 106–116.

▶ Quote:

- . . . there are still many qualitative researchers who either ignore or actively question the use of such software, implying that its use, in conjunction with more traditional methods of analysis, is corrupting. (p. 108)

# Horse/Cart Metaphor

Maslow's hierarchy of needs



Frequent Flier #  
GY57209





# Horse / Cart Hyperbole

Gilbert, L. (2002). Going the distance: "Closeness" in qualitative data analysis software. *Special Issue of The International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 5(3), 215–228.

## ▶ Quote

- Software developers and users of QDA programs have complained that the programs have been condemned for flaws that more properly apply to the methods themselves, and called for a more vigorous and general discussion of methods (Fielding & Lee, 1996; Fielding & Lee, 1998; Kelle, 1997; Richards, 1998a, 1998b). QDA programs should not be censured for crystallizing standard practices or for explicating existing problems. Neither should software developers be in the position of driving methodological development because other qualitative researchers do not sufficiently articulate analytical procedures and goals. (p 224)

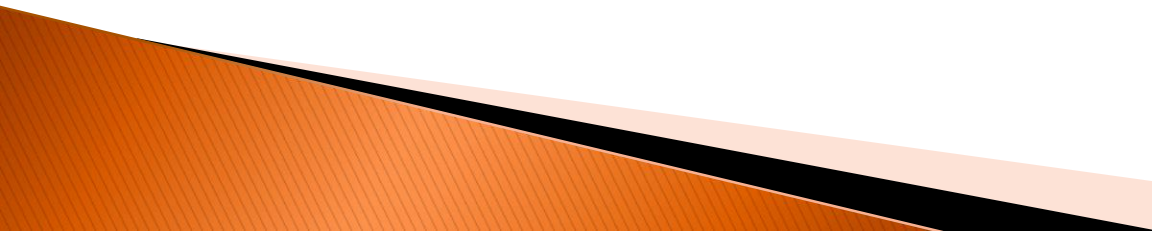
# Chicken/Egg Metaphor



## Chicken/Egg Hyperbole

▶ Well . . . it depends!

# PART TWO

- The merits of one of the Tropes: The Chicken/Egg
  - Lessons from interactive digital art
  - The cure for over-tropification
- 

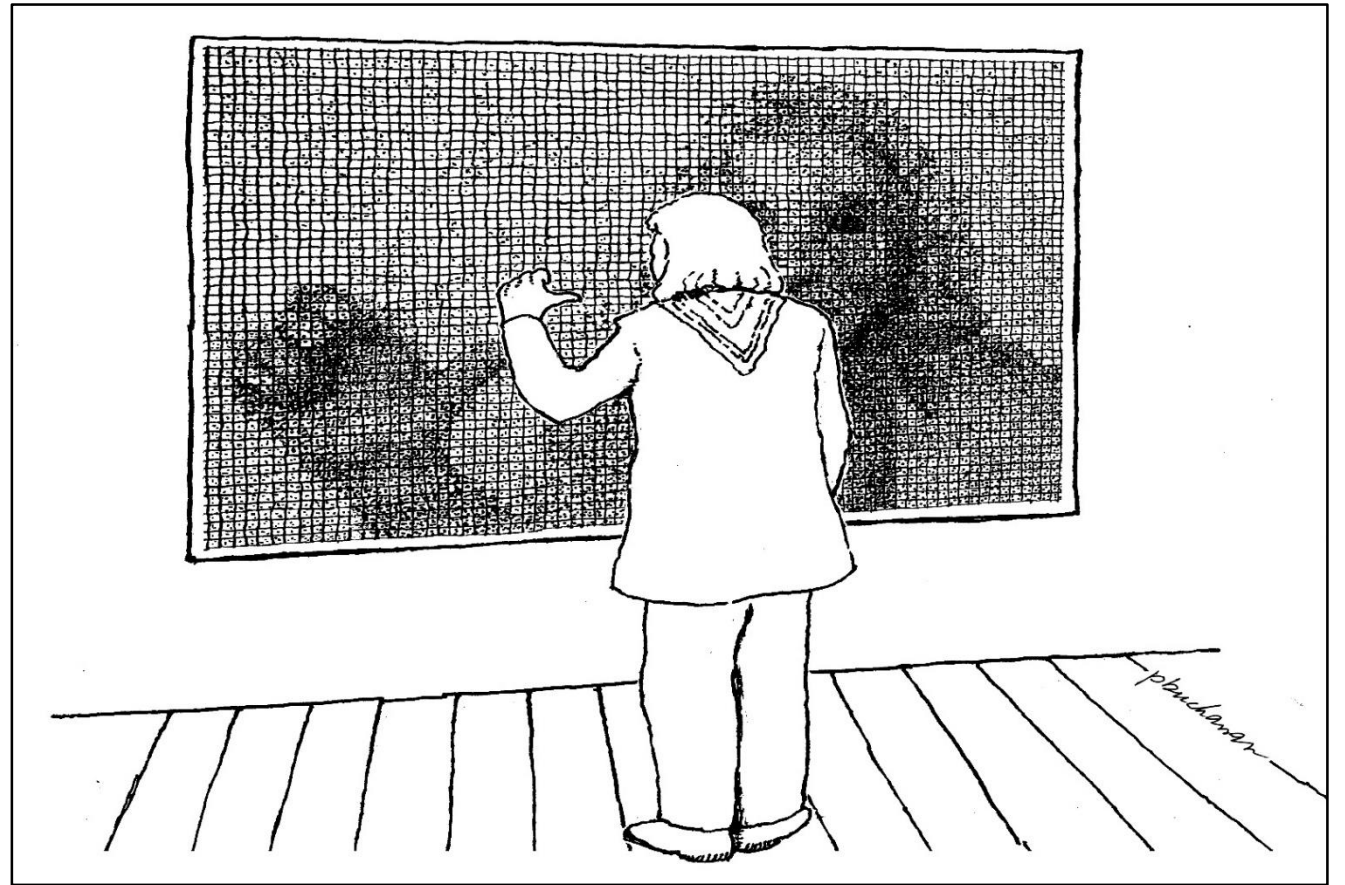
# Chicken/Egg Reality: Getting Comprehensive with this “umbrella” Trope/Metaphor

- ▶ Davidson & diGregio (2011)
  - Technology always had an interactive relationship with the researcher
- ▶ Evers, Silver, Mruck & Peeters (2011)
  - Complex interaction between software and method
- ▶ Gilbert (2001)
  - The tools are both enabling and limiting
- ▶ Jackson (2014)
  - The technology and the researcher are mutually constituting
- ▶ Kaczynski & Kelly (2004)
  - Knowledge is both embedded and constructed
- ▶ Silver & Patashnick (2011)
  - Elusive relationship between software and methodology

# Wooden Mirror: Daniel Rozin

Woman visiting “Wooden Mirror” exhibit

Drawing by Patricia Buchanan (2016)



# Bolter and Gromala: Windows and Mirrors

## ▶ Wooden Mirror

- Every successful digital artifact oscillates between being invisible and being available for scrutiny.

“Good digital design, like digital art, can reshape its contexts as well as respond to them. In fact, it reshapes contexts *by* responding to them. Digital art redefines contexts.” (p. 140)

# Biomorphic Font: Diane Gromala

Simulated snapshot of “Excretia” font.

Drawing by Patricia Buchanan (2016).





# The Cure for Over-Tropification (take one of each, daily!)

## From Part 1

- A. Before you use a quote describing the impact of QDAS, go back to the original source!! (research 101)
  - Watch out for the tropes
- B. Look for the discourse of “case-making” (all the reasons the author is correct and as a result they are telling you what to think) versus the discourse of “inquiry” (all the ways the author tried to go about thinking through and investigating the topic, including conundrums and unexpected turns).
  - Is the original source well-reasoned and/or well-researched?
    - If so, use it.
    - If not, move on and don't use it.

## From Part 2

- A. Contribute to the establishment of a research agenda that focuses on the spaces where researchers and technologies meet. Practice theory would be a good place to start!

# Acknowledgments

- ▶ Patricia A. Adler & Peter Adler (2008). Of rhetoric and representation: The four faces of ethnography. *Sociological Quarterly* 49, 1–30.
- ▶ Kristi Jackson
  - “Where qualitative researchers and technologies meet: Lessons from interactive digital art” (an article in a special issue of *Qualitative Inquiry* on digital tools for qualitative research, in press).
  - “Turning against each other in neoliberal times: The discourses of otherizing and how they threaten our scholarship (a chapter in *Qualitative inquiry in neoliberal times*, in press):
- ▶ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980). *Metaphors we Live by*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- ▶ Lyn Richards (2005). *Handling qualitative data*. London: Sage Publications.
- ▶ David Bolter and Diane Gromala (2003). *Windows and mirrors*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- ▶ Digital Tools for Qualitative Research (DTQR) collaboration
  - Trena Paulus and Judith Davidson



## Digital Tools for Qualitative Research

“Bringing together qualitative researchers to discuss the role of digital tools in the ongoing construction of qualitative research practice.”

- ▶ **Special Interest Group at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (each year in May at the University of Illinois, Urbana–Champaign)**
- ▶ **Email: [DigitalTools@queri.com](mailto:DigitalTools@queri.com)**
- ▶ **Facebook: [DigitalToolsForQualitativeResearch](https://www.facebook.com/DigitalToolsForQualitativeResearch)**
- ▶ **Web: [DTQR.wordpress.com](http://DTQR.wordpress.com)**
- ▶ **Twitter: [@Digital\\_Qual](https://twitter.com/Digital_Qual)**

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