What are *SAGE Research Methods* Case Studies?

SAGE Research Methods Cases are used for teaching and learning social science research methods in more than 350 institutions worldwide. Cases are peer-reviewed and are . . .

- **Short** and **accessible** accounts of **research methods** in the context of **real research projects**

- **Pedagogically focused** to help students understand the practicalities of doing research

- **Introductory in tone**: explanatory and jargon-free

- **Engaging**: using examples and writing devices that reach out to the student reader and make research feel relevant, meaningful and useful

What is the focus of Doing Research Online Cases?

Main types of cases in the Doing Research Online collection include:

- Cases **highlighting challenges of specific steps of research** e.g. data collection from Twitter; recruiting participants online; getting ethics committee approval for an innovative methodology; creating, managing and storing digital data effectively;

- Cases about using **innovative digital methods** e.g. the use of gaming techniques for social research, virtual ethnography

- Cases highlighting **challenges of redesigning research studies/adapting research plans** for online and what methodological implications this presents

- Cases **highlighting challenges of online data analysis**, including qual, quant and big data

Please discuss the focus of your case study with your editorial contact before you start writing. If your case study deviates from the above topics this must be made clear to your editorial contact, who will be able to advise as to whether the focus is within the scope of this resource.

Each case study should include a brief overview of the entire project, but focus in-depth on just one or two stages or aspects of the research, for example data collection or data analysis.

Whilst each case study will be drawn from a specific research project, authors should seek to draw out lessons that are widely applicable. The aim of these case studies is to introduce the reader to the topic at hand and to provide **methodological guidance** and **practical insights** which can be **employed in their own research.**

Authors: Please complete only the white fields below. Please add additional rows for co-authors, including for names, emails, affiliations and author bios.

Case Study Title		*Title must include the method and research topic. For example, "Challenges in Using Social Media for Qualitative Social Research: Men's Motivations for Illicit Recreational Drug Use"]* *Preserving the Present: Designing a Child-Centered Qualitative Survey for a National Observatory of Children's Play*
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Author bio. *Please include a separate biography for each author. Maximum of 200 words per author.*		Dr Yinka Olusoga is a Lecturer in Education and Course Director of the BA Education, Culture and Childhood at the University of Sheffield. Her research explores histories of childhood and of play with a focus on children's creative and digital literacies and on the inter-generational co-construction of play and storytelling. Her approach draws on critical discourse analysis, visual analysis and ethnographic research methods. She engages in critical work with archives, examining the operation of power in intersecting discursive constructions of social class, gender, sexuality and race. Yinka is Director of the British Academy Research Project "Childhoods and Play: The Iona and Peter Opie Archive" and she is a co-investigator on the collaborative UCL/University of Sheffield project "A National Observatory of Children's Play Experiences During Covid-19" (funded by the ESRC), leading the research team from the University of Sheffield. She has a background as an early years teacher and as a teacher educator. She is a co-editor of the best-selling book *Perspectives on Play: Learning for Life*. Yinka also serves on the committee of the Children's History Society as Children's Officer.
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Author bio. *Please include a separate biography for each author. Maximum of 200 words per author.*		Dr Catherine Bannister is a Research Associate on the project "A National Observatory of Children's Play and Experiences During Covid-19" (funded by the ESRC). Based at the University of Sheffield, she is a qualitative researcher with a background in Folklore, and in Sociology. Her research interests include the informal educational, customary and ceremonial practices of uniformed youth organisations, life-course passage with a focus on childhood and youth, and, more recently, wider cultural traditions as expressed by young people in virtual / online spaces, and using or drawing on digital technology and media. Catherine was previously a cataloguer of digitised documents from the Archive of Iona and Peter Opie (held at the Bodleian Library, Oxford) on the (EPSRC funded) project *Playing the Archive: Community, Memory and Mixed Reality Play*, and a researcher on the *Children, Technology and Play* study, funded by the LEGO Foundation. She is a member of the Folklore Society.
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Author bio. *Please include a separate biography for each author. Maximum of 200 words per author.*		*Dr Julia Bishop is a Research Associate in the School of Education, University of Sheffield, where she researches into children's folklore. Julia focuses on creativity, continuity and change, especially in musical play, and children's agency in these processes, and her research often combines synchronic and diachronic approaches. She has extensive experience of ethnographic work with children and has conducted historical research into the collections of Iona and Peter Opie, Norman Douglas, James T. R. Ritchie, and J. M. Carpenter.* *Her publications include Changing Play: Play, Media and Commercial Culture From the 1950s to the Present Day (co-authored with Jackie Marsh, 2014), The Lifework and Legacy of Iona and Peter Opie: Research into Children's Play (co-edited with June Factor, 2019), and Play Today in the Primary School Playground: Life, Learning and Creativity (co-edited with Mavis Curtis, 2001).*

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Author bio. *Please include a separate biography for each author. Maximum of 200 words per author.*		*[Maximum of 200 words]* *Dr Valerio Signorelli is a Lecturer in Connected Environments at the Bartlett Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis, UCL. An architect by training, Valerio takes an interdisciplinary research approach drawing together social sciences and the computer science domain. His research interests focus on sensory urbanism, specifically on the multisensory integration between visual and auditory modalities, and digital simulation tools for visualising urban data sets in their temporal, sensory and spatial peculiarities.*
Research Project Discipline Alert your editorial contact if the relevant field is not included prior to writing your entry.		[Click here to select discipline] Education
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Published articles		*[Insert an APA-style reference, 7th edition, for any publications resulting from this research]*
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DOI		
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Word count of blank case study template: 1500. Word limit of 5000 does not include section summaries, discussion questions, MCQs, or reference lists.

Abstract

The abstract should be a concise summary of your case study. What aspect of the research process, or specific methodological and practical challenges, will your case study address? It should be succinct and enticing, and should incorporate key words and concepts discussed in the body of the text. Please do not *cite references within the abstract.*

This case study examines the complexities of rapid-response data collection via the Play Observatory project's online qualitative survey of children, families and child-oriented organisations. This research took place during a global pandemic, and combined data collection with cataloguing and preserving materials for future research. Placing child-centredness, inclusivity, and playful and emotional experiences at the heart of our methodology presented challenges in finding innovative ways to connect with children as full participants, and allow them space and opportunity within a survey structure to represent themselves and their play. It also highlighted perceived ethical and legal tensions around the collection of personal data, including "special category data", and its preservation in the long term.

We discuss how we addressed these obstacles by:

- adapting an established clinical survey tool into a more qualitative format recognising children as principal contributors;
- employing multimodal innovations in the form of emojis, and a virtual project mascot as a "co-researcher" and information mediator to children; and
- c ritically evaluating and reimagining approaches to demographic data collection, which allowed us to build in opportunities for participants to self-describe aspects of their identities.   .

We also demonstrate how current data protection law can allow for long-term data preservation under regulations that serve both researchers and research participants.

The case study highlights   the value of earlier research to present-day projects, relating how we were inspired by survey research into children's play begun in the 1950s that broke new ground in its child-oriented nature. By the same token we urge researchers today to consider their data's longitudinal value and its potential for future re-use.

Learning Outcomes
Please refer back to these learning outcomes when writing your case study. Your case study must satisfy each proposed outcome. It is vital that you provide achievable and measurable learning outcomes. Please see the links below for guidance on writing effective learning outcomes:

- *[Writing learning outcomes](#)*
- *[Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs](#)*

[Insert 3–5 learning outcomes under the following statement: "By the end of this case, students should be able to . . ."].

By the end of this guide, students should be able to . . .

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- Understand that qualitative online surveys can be useful tools for social, cultural and historical research
- Examine ways in which online surveys can be child-centred and flexible to allow children to record their identities in ways that are meaningful to them
- Reflect on the ethical and legal implications of gathering and preserving contextual and 'special category' data (under General Data Protection Regulation) for the future
- Evaluate the potential historical value of their own research and appreciate the importance of preserving data for the future in secure and responsible ways
- Appreciate the value of interdisciplinary research.

Case Study
[Insert your case study here. The main body of the text should be between 2,000 and

5,000 words.]

Headings and sub-headings add structure to the body of your case, enhance online discoverability and make your case easier to read on screen. This template includes suggested headings, you should also add your own according to the focus of your case study.

Each main section with a heading must be followed by a Section Summary.
Each Section Summary should consist of 2-3 bullet points, written out as full sentences, succinctly encapsulating the preceding section.

Suggested headings:

Project Overview and Context
> *Includes information about the substantive focus of your research project. Why were you interested in studying this topic, particularly using the methods you chose? Are the methods you chose typical for researching your topic? If not, explain your choice of methods. This section should not read as a literature review, but should be a reflective exploration of your research interests.*

"A National Observatory of Children's Play Experiences During COVID-19" was a 15-month Economic and Social Research Council-funded rapid response research project running from November 2020 to January 2022. It was a collaborative project bringing together a team of researchers of play and communication, new literacies, creative and digital production, histories of childhood, folklore, and connected environments from the University College London (UCL) Institute of Education, the University of Sheffield's School of Education, and UCL Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis. Our aim was to examine children's play experiences during the pandemic, and how these differ from, or continue, pre-pandemic practices.

The project's approach was partly informed by the engagement of research team members with the British Academy project *Childhoods and Play: The Iona and Peter Opie Archive*, and with a series of related earlier projects linking archival and contemporary research into children's play and playground cultures. The Opies were folklorists who collected children's testimony about their play. They did this through written surveys, conducted in the 1950s and 60s, in which children were asked to respond to open questions about their play (Bishop, 2014). The children's responses are now being digitised and made available via the online Iona and Peter Opie Archive (opiearchive.org) for the use of researchers and others interested in play, childhood and history. Thus, insights from

the Opies' own development of "informal questionnaires" that spoke directly to children (Opie,1989, p. 60),   and our own digitisation, cataloguing and indexing of their archival material, came to inform aspects of the Play Observatory research. In particular, we recognised the long-term   value of historic studies and archived data to contemporary research methods, and the need to collect information on the social / cultural backgrounds of survey respondents. We also wanted to design a qualitative survey tool that could capture not just what was being played, but by whom, when, how, where and why.

The Play Observatory project aimed to document young people's play experiences during this unusual time in both breadth and depth. Rather than more typical approaches to researching play, that involve direct observation and discussion with children "in the moment", we ~~therefore~~ decided to implement a national survey, complemented by in-depth ethnographic interviews with children, conducted online due to COVID-19 restrictions. ~~which COVID-19 restrictions necessitated be conducted online~~ . Our focus was on capturing children's reflections on their play, predominantly in their own words and through their own methods of self-expression, including emotional expression. This ~~which~~ supported our project commitment to explore children's wellbeing, and on preserving this valuable data for the future, in a university-based open-   access repository, as well as for our current research goals.

Like the Opies, we employed a broad definition of play (cf. Sutton-Smith, 1997), extending beyond children's peer play cultures (Corsaro, 2012) to activities and hobbies, and customary and seasonal practices, all of which can take place alone and with others, indoors and outdoors, and online and offline or a blending of the two. We understand play to be a complex activity, co-constructed by children within social, cultural and historical contexts (Olusoga, 2019). We also set wide parameters when defining children and childhood, from infants to the age of 17   inclusively, so as to observe the play and leisure activities of young people of different ages and stages during the pandemic.

This case study discusses the methodological issues addressed by the survey design team in adapting an existing survey tool, REDCap, more commonly used for biomedical and clinical research, into a qualitative survey tool which foregrounds the child, is capable of engaging children in playful and appealing ways, and which captures aspects of the identities of child contributors as individuals in their own right. Our discussion explains how we achieved that adaptation through child-centred language, the use of a mascot / virtual team member to interpret the project to children, through animation and the use of emojis within the survey. It further recounts how the team navigated ethical and legal issues around personal data to ensure that the rich contextual information - necessary for an inclusive picture of children's pandemic-related play lives - can be gathered and preserved, creating a collection not only for the present but for research in the future.

Section summary

- *This case study focuses on the national survey that was carried out as part of the project "A National Observatory of Children's Play Experiences During COVID-19".*
- *As this rapid response study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey team had to adapt an existing biomedical survey platform to create an engaging multimodal survey tool suitable for use with children.*

Research Design

*Includes an investigation into how you designed your study, taking into account any fundamental decisions you had to make. **This section should emphasize the aspects of the research project – specific methods or challenges - that you will focus on in this case study**. You should ensure that you define and explain any key terms for student readers.*

A child-centred qualitative survey

Our project sought to combine social research into children's contemporary experiences and the foundations of an historical archive. As well as ~~combining~~ bringing together digital humanities and social scientific approaches, we strove to place children at the centre of the research. This meant that the online qualitative survey needed to be accessible and engaging to children and young people. It also needed to gather data that would allow future historical researchers to interrogate the collection in relation to those who helped create it and whose lives are represented in it, including detail about their social and cultural identities and contexts. Furthermore, our project's additional focus on wellbeing compelled us to consider how we could ~~ed us to consider the ways in which we could~~ adapt our online survey tool to address and capture children's thoughts on the emotional aspect of their play experiences.

As a rapid response project, time was a constraining factor. In respect to this, we adapted an existing survey platform, REDCap, which met data protection requirements (discussed below) given our intent to collect a series of sensitive data, and which avoided   the need to create a bespoke tool from scratch. REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture) was designed by biomedical informatics as a 'secure web-based software platform designed to support data capture for research studies'. This tool enables   the collection of multimodal data which can then be exported   for cataloguing   . However,   making it engaging and navigable for children and families became our challenge.

Our first step was to create a distinct branch of the survey for child contributors. Drawing on the possibility afforded by REDCap of creating multiple data-gathering components (or 'instruments'), our survey was structured into two pathways that channel respondents through three instruments (Figure 1). Within the child contributor

pathway, the consent instrument is designed to be completed by parent/legal guardian with the child and is addressed to them both. It leads to a demographic instrument ("Child/Young Person details") and a collecting instrument ("Your contributions"), both addressed to the child. The demographic instrument is a once-only form, whereas the collecting instrument can be used multiple times by the contributor via a personalised link.
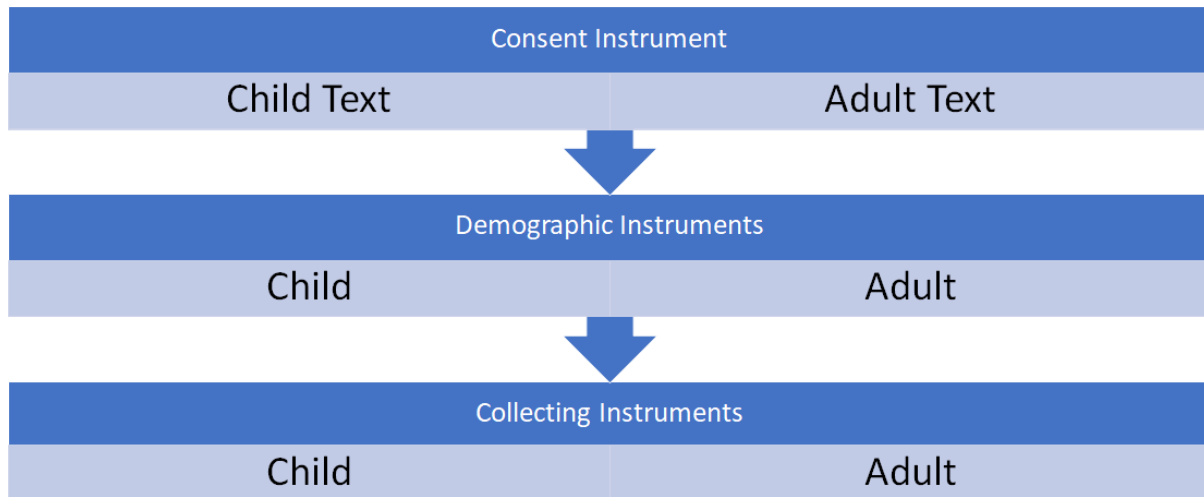
Consent Instrument

| Child Text | Adult Text |

Demographic Instruments

| Child | Adult |

Collecting Instruments

| Child | Adult |

Figure 1: Pathways and instruments of the survey
Alt text: Diagrammatic representation of instruments and pathways within the survey

Addressing the child

Centering the child in our online survey was the guiding principle underpinning the research design and development process. The child is both the central audience for our information, and the voice we want our project to locate and amplify. We need to ~~carry~~ sustain the child's interest and motivation as they engage with our website, sign up for the survey and make their contribution.

, ~~and~~ For us, this involved constantly attending to the question of who is being addressed and how. Collecting data via an online survey complicates such centering, as child contributors need adult support and/or agreement to sign up to the project and start making their contributions.

This is why "Peeps" (Figure 2) came into being as a crucial member of the research team.

Figure 2: Peeps
   Alt text: Image of Peeps, the project's visual mascot

In keeping with the ethos of the project, the development of Peeps was multimodal. The original visual design of Peeps comes from the Adobe Character Animator mascot Red Monster, freely distributed by Adobe (Schisler, 2020). The original character was remixed and co-designed with two children. They led on naming Peeps (making a pun on the name of   Samuel Pepys,   one of history's most famous eye-witnesses) and describing Peeps' character - 'a sweet and inquisitive shapeshifter' - and role in the project. Peeps' status as a research team member was visually established on our website's   "Team"   page where, as with the other team members, Peeps appeared in current and younger form (Figure 3), and with a brief research interests statement. Peeps was also brought to virtual life in an animation, voiced by one of the children, to introduce the project   and was given a personal theme tune   composed by the project's Principal Investigator.

Peeps is a sweet and inquisitive shapeshifter who is very interested in play and how children have fun

Figure 3: Younger version of Peeps
Alt text: Image of a younger version of the project's visual mascot, Peeps, with accompanying descriptive text and social media icons

On the "Play your part" section of the website (where the project and participation guidelines are explained to the public), Peeps acted as a visual marker of text addressed to the child/young person (Figure 4). We situated the image of Peeps and the accompanying text (colour-coded to match Peeps) at the top of each page in this section. Peeps thus provided a prompt for adults to read this text to/with the child as they worked their way through the key information that led them to the survey starting point.

Figure 4: Peeps as a visual marker of text addressed to the child/young person
Alt text: Project webpage showing use of Peeps, the project's visual mascot, in the survey participant information

Once consent was given by the parent or legal guardian and the child registered with the project via the demographic instrument of the survey, they could then move to the collecting instrument to start making survey contributions. Here Peeps also appeared at the top of the page, addressing the child by name and providing some prompts to help inspire and structure their contribution (Figure 5). We thus centred the child by foregrounding Peeps and what Peeps had to say.

Figure 5: Peeps addressing the child in the collecting instrument

Alt text: Peeps, the project's visual mascot, on the survey's child collecting instrument

Knowing the child

A second issue related to the centering of child contributors in the survey concerned understanding their identity. On an individual level we wanted to understand how they perceive themselves. On a societal level   we wanted to learn about the demographic reach of the project, in order to inform any outreach work targeting underrepresented groups and to tell us more about the social and cultural contexts of the play data we received. Here we took a critical stance that acknowledged the tensions between identity that is claimed by individuals and   identity that is ascribed to them by others (Appiah, 2007; Jenkins, 2014). We also   recognised that identity is intersectional (Crenshaw, 1989), meaning that it is made up of a range of overlapping factors (such as gender, ethnicity, social class, dis/ability, etc.) that impact on how an individual experiences, and is treated in, society.

The demographic collecting instrument prompts children to respond to questions about their 'ethnicity', gender and dis/ability. These are posed as optional questions. During the design process, our thinking was informed by Aspinall (2012), who interrogated answer formats for questions relating to ethnicity in the British Census.   Only introduced to the Census in 1991, and altered in each subsequent census, these ethnicity categories from the Census are routinely drawn upon and reproduced in other surveys and forms we encounter in public life. As Aspinall discusses   , these categories reflect a   colonialist history, from a specific viewpoint, and present an inconsistent   mixture of categories covering ethnicity, nationality and phenotype (i.e. visible differences such as skin colour).   As ethnic diversity and ethnic mixing within the population has increased (Vertovec, 2007, p. 7)   ), these categories leave some with no label (apart from 'Other') and others with a label that they may find inadequate or uncomfortable (Aspinall, 2012).   Aspinall explores the pros and cons of free-text boxes for self-identification, in place of or alongside tick boxes, arguing that free text produces more meaningful constructions of identity. However, he also acknowledges the complexity that produces for processing that data. We asked ourselves how meaningful the existing Census ethnicity questions are for children. Moreover, ethically we wanted as a principle for children and young people to be able to claim and foreground their self-ascribed identities, rather than just having to fit into the often unsatisfactory official categories that render parts of their identity invisible.

Tuning into emotion and play

Our project wanted to better understand the role and value of play for wellbeing during times of crisis and adversity. Recent work on the histories of childhood and of play has drawn on insights from the developing field of the history of emotion to highlight the role of play in children's emotional development (Olsen, 2016). Vallgårda et al. (2015) argue that children's daily lives involves movement across affective boundaries (for example, "school, playgrounds, religious sites, work and home") and their involvement

within networks of affective relationships, and that in play "children practice and perform emotions, develop habits of feeling, and in so doing, learn how to feel" (Olsen, 2016, p. 324). We were keen to understand how COVID was disrupting this, and how children, via their play, were finding ways to manoeuvre around this disruption.

REDCap's functionality included the capacity to embed images. We explored REDCap's Image Map module to see how this had been used by other researchers in biomedical surveys, for example, in the self-reporting of pain intensity via a visual chart (Marlycormar/Imagemap 2020). This approach, we realised, offered an opportunity to explore the use of emojis in our own survey. Extending the survey in this way was experimental, yet informed by work on earlier projects that had valued children's multimodal modes of expression.

Veltri (2019) discusses the limitation of the use of emojis in digital social research, much of which is conducted with adults. He agrees   that emojis can "complement the tone of statements" but warns that "it is hard to imagine them being as rich as people's real emotional displays" (p. 67). However, we were eager to explore their potential for two reasons. Firstly, their visual nature makes them accessible for younger children who can interact with them on a screen but cannot yet type written responses. Secondly, emojis have the potential to prompt a conversation about play and emotion between child contributors and their adults that could be illuminating.

We curated an emoji "set" (drawn from Joypixels / Emojione, 2019) to represent a range of possible emotions including happiness, sadness, anger, worry, and "just ok", designing the survey to ask contributors if they would like to use emojis before they were revealed. We ~~elected~~ chose not to provide written labels describing them, but to add a supplementary text box where children could expand on their feelings (Figure 6). We did not presume how play feels or that it is always "fun", as play is more popularly understood. We allowed contributors to select multiple emojis rather than choose just one, acknowledging that emotional states are often complex and layered, and that play can cause shifts in emotions and wellbeing.

Figure 6: Emotions prompt with open text box and emojis
Alt text: Survey prompts for open text and emoji checkboxes

Section summary

- We made *our survey child-centred by visually foregrounding information for children and placing it before that addressed to adults*
- *We took children's complex intersectional identities seriously by prioritising their right to claim their identity over our need for an easy way to process data.*
- *Our survey was was designed to capture detail of the context(s) of play in the pandemic, including its emotional aspects, as well as what children played.*

Research Practicalities Legal Stuff/Future Proofing
*This should include a discussion of the **primary aspects of focus** for this case study.*

Which aspects of the process you had to navigate when conducting your research will hold the most value for the student reader? For example, how did you recruit participants of your study, or access secondary data? What method was employed for data collection or data analysis? How did you work within a wider research team? What ethical/legal considerations were essential? You might choose to rename this section, or to include a subsequent section (or sections) with a sub-heading that directly relates to the primary focus of the case study.

Having established the underpinning philosophy and areas of focus of the survey, there were a number of ethical and legal steps involved in making it possible to implement those philosophical choices.

Ethics and legalities
Rapid-response collecting around a significant event and its impact(s) brings with it demands to gather data capturing a situation as it unfolds, while creating a comprehensive record for future researchers to interrogate in the longer term. In this case, our need to collect as broad and diverse a range of experiences as possible acknowledges that marginalisation, and factors including age and social status, and archival silences may go hand in hand (Tebeau, 2021). Also, narratives of loss and 'missing out', ascribed to childrens' lives during the pandemic, can obscure nuances in children's lived experiences; negative, positive, and everywhere in between.

Gathering richer demographic information about child participants offered us the potential to track our survey's social reach, and so monitor whether we were meeting our inclusive aspirations. We anticipated, too, that by doing so, our collection would draw out these aforementioned nuances in experience, increasing our chances of creating an accurate record of the multiple pandemic experiences of multiple individual children. And while creating a survey allowing children to choose to, and how to, self-

represent is arguably ethical good practice by supporting children as active contributors to our research and eventual archive, these demographic details preempt questions pertinent to historians and social scientists.

Signing up to our online survey required both child and adult participants to share some personal data: the names and email addresses of adult contributors, and the name and email address of an adult parent or guardian giving consent for a child to take part. Child contributors' first (given) names, age, ancestry, ethnic or cultural background, and disability were also collected, and both child and adult contributors' place of residence, and gender.

However, our experiences working in the humanities and social sciences, and with archival data both digital and tangible, had alerted us to potential perceived tensions arising from our intent to collect and preserve such information. The detailed data around our participants' identities meant navigating personal data protection legislation - information about a living individual which on its own, or in combination with other data, makes them identifiable. The EU's General Data Protection Regulation, and its UK implementation under the Data Protection Act 2018, plus associated secondary legislation, which constitute data protection law in the UK, and which began to apply from May 2018, were intended to shore up personal data security in a digital era by controlling how personal data is used by the government, businesses and organisations, including universities.

Data, the rules state, should be held no longer than necessary, requiring the setting of data retention timescales. As a result, Boyd et al. point out: "A perceived 'end' of study could be coupled with pressure to destroy research databases or render data anonymous" (2018, p. 3). Furthermore, under these regulations, some of the personal data integral to self-representation - ethnic background, and health information - is classed as more sensitive and defined as "special category" data, requiring enhanced protection.

The legislation does, though, incorporate exemptions allowing collection and preservation of data in the longer term, provided that there are appropriate safeguards in place protecting individuals' rights and freedoms. GDPR Article 5(1)(e) allows for a longer retention period for personal data that "will be processed solely for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes". This can be done in accordance with Article 89(1) which lays out the safeguards and derogations requisite to processing and archiving such data.

Hence the legal basis on which our participants' personal data is collected and processed is a "task carried out in the public interest" and for the special category data in particular, "archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific research purposes or statistical purposes". Transparency, another important tenet of the GDPR, requires us to describe our intentions and their rationale clearly on the information pages relating

to the survey, highlight the relevant legal basis for the processing of personal data, and to provide contact details of the data controller. As part of the consent process, participants were informed as to how and under what legislation their data would be processed and preserved, as well as how to contact the project, citing the study's Data Protection number.

Section summary
- *Collecting personal data, including "special category data", is important in order to contextualise research data for present and future use, and to evaluate the representativeness of contemporary research.*
- *GDPR and the UK Data Protection Act 2018 allow for long-term preservation of personal data when gathered "in the public interest", provided that researchers observe accompanying legislative safeguards.*
- *We encourage researchers to engage with data protection law in relation to qualitative research.*

Method in Action

This should be a "warts and all" description and evaluation of how your chosen research method/approach actually worked in practice. What went well? What did not go to plan? What challenges did you face? How did you respond? What would you do differently?

Balancing the needs of the research with trying to make only reasonable and clear demands of the research contributors meant that gaining rapid feedback about the survey tool in action was vital to the project. The need for contextual detail about the contributions and the contributors was at times in tension with user-friendliness and understandable societal concerns about personal data that are heightened when that data relates to children. Therefore, piloting the first version of the survey with a range of test subjects was of huge importance. The pilot, which involved adults and children, gave us indispensable feedback on the feel of accessing and interacting with the different instruments within the survey. This led to us utilising more of the features of REDCap in order to allow contributors to choose whether they wanted more or fewer prompts to structure their contributions, allowing us to simplify the default layout of the survey on the screen.

The flexibility we built in regarding identity was partially informed by a concern that asking these types of questions might discourage people from contributing, however, this concern does not seem to have been realised. Participants did take advantage of the flexibility of the options in terms of sharing personal data, doing so to a degree and in ways they felt comfortable with. Self-description of ethnic and cultural background, for example, gave us more insight than just providing census-style tick boxes would supply, and families also chose to share details of dis/ability and neurodiversity.

The prompts within the survey to reflect on the emotional aspect of the play contributions also saw some success. Reviewing the incoming data several weeks after the survey was launched, we noticed that not every contributor chose to make use of the emojis, and those that did tended to choose only one. This made us realise that we had not indicated in the accompanying text that it was indeed possible to select multiple emojis, so we updated the text to include that information. The open textbox for comments about emotion provided some fascinating commentary on play, from both children and adults, which added considerably to the ways in which the images and descriptions could be interpreted.

Although our project was designed as a national survey of children's play, our survey attracted some international contributions. Partly, this reflected the global spread and interconnectedness of families, and the nature and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as a shared global event. We considered this additional data to be a welcome addition to our corpus.

Section summary
- *Piloting a survey and listening to feedback benefits research studies, allowing for issues to be highlighted and addressed before the research proper begins.*
- *Online / digital methods means research may have a greater reach than originally anticipated.*
- *Monitoring incoming data in the early stages of a study allows for the identifying and addressing of minor issues before they begin to impact more problematically on data collection.*

Practical Lessons Learned
This is perhaps the most important section of your research methods case study*. This should be an in-depth reflection on the specific methods/approaches used in the research project, detailing the important lessons you learned from this experience. Student readers must be able to learn from these lessons in order to inform their own research projects.*

When designing the survey, we were aware that some of our decisions about the structure and level of respondent choice in the survey would inevitably lead to issues for us when we came to export, catalogue and index the data. This was certainly borne out in practice. Self-description, open-text boxes and emojis, whilst allowing us to fulfil some of our philosophical and ethical intentions established at the beginning of the project, also produced data that needed considerable attention and thought as the project drew to a close. The fact that contributors did engage with opportunities for self-representation to claim and label their own identities is proof that this concept and

approach works. The value of this approach has been demonstrated as both important for inclusive demographic data gathering, but also as an ethical approach that we recommend that scholars can and should adopt in order to respect and understand the complex identities of their respondents.

A huge factor in the success of a national survey depends on getting word out that the survey exists and is inviting public participation. The project website and social media presence therefore became important as our main means of advertising the project. The look and feel of the website mirrored key elements of the survey design, such as the presence of Peeps as the team member who directly addresses children. The website hosted a series of regular blogs, written by the team and by guests, including children. Some discussed themes emerging from the data, and even featured examples from the incoming survey contributions, as a way of illustrating for potential contributors, the range of play and experience relevant to the project. Thus, keeping track of incoming data, and discussing initial analytic themes became an important focus for the project team.

As the project progressed, Peeps became involved in additional work by the survey team to promote the project and raise awareness of the survey. A series of free resource packs for schools, settings and youth organisations was created, featuring Peeps. As part of the Economic and Social Research Council's Festival of Social Science, a film starring Peeps was made to introduce the project in two online workshops for families and for teachers and practitioners. Peeps thus became a valuable means of mediating information beyond initial expectations.

> *Section summary*
> ● *However well designed your online survey is, people need to know about it in order for it to be effective, and thus it is essential to develop strategies to bring it to the attention of potential respondents, and to encourage and acknowledge responses through renewed publicity and promotional events with a "human face".*
> ● *More flexibility for respondents makes data export and cataloguing more complex so it is important to be aware of the workload implications of your decisions.*

Conclusion

> *Includes a round-up of the issues discussed in your case study. This should not be a discussion of conclusions drawn from the research findings, but should focus reflectively on the research methodology. Include just enough detail of your findings to enable the reader to understand how the method/approach you used could be utilized by others. Would you recommend using this method/approach or, on reflection, would you make different choices in the future? **What can readers learn from your experience and apply to their own research?***

Can you imagine someone in 50 years time being interested in your data and your respondents? If so, do you therefore have a historical duty of care? With some projects, the historical significance of the data to be collected may be immediately apparent, whereas for other projects the immediate contemporary knowledge landscape may be the only focus. But, we would argue that for anyone engaging in social scientific research, it is a worthwhile idea to ask yourself whether you can imagine a historian of the future being interested in your project, and if so, what kinds of questions might they have of your data and of the respondents who provided it. A great deal of humanities research depends on archived data, and such sources also enable contemporary social scientific research to situate current phenomena, events, groups and activities within a temporal framework. Attitudes and practices surrounding the implementation of the GDPR legislation in universities, however, run the risk of limiting the availability   of valuable archive material for future researchers. It is thus vital to note that, rather than being an insurmountable barrier to collecting and storing personal data, GDPR in fact makes provision for personal data gathered for archival, scientific or historical research or statistical purposes to be re-used for a purpose other than the one it was collected for, provided this is compatible with the original purpose. However, to be able to achieve this successfully, plans for long-term storage,   preservation of, and access to the data need to be thought through at an early stage.

As the Opies found in their survey work in the 1950s-1980s, research with children inevitably involves some mediation through adults as gate-keepers and supporters, and the digital nature of our project emphasised this even more. However, a commitment to centering the child in the research approach and design of materials prompted us to interrogate how meaningful and accessible our survey questions and research tools were. In the case of online surveys this included exploring and exploiting the affordances of the REDCap digital platform, to make our survey multimodal and flexible, both in navigating the questions, and in facilitating return visits from respondents to upload further contributions over the lifespan of the project. Whilst, if time and money had been no object, we would have been interested in developing a bespoke platform for the survey, adapting an existing platform presented us with structures, processes, provocations and opportunities that helped us to ask ourselves pertinent questions and to develop creative solutions to design problems.

Discussion Questions

[Insert three to five discussion questions on the methods described in your case

study]

Discussion questions should be suitable for eliciting debate and critical thinking. Avoid questions which require only a single-word answer such as "yes" or "no."

1. What do you think are the challenges of designing an online survey that appeals to, and can be used by, children and young people from infancy to 18?

2. What are the potential benefits of collecting images, video and audio alongside text description of children's play?

3. What potential data and privacy issues do you think are raised by including the facility to upload image, video and audio files to the online survey?

4. Why is Peeps included in the website text and images as a part of the research team? What message does that send to children and young people?

5. What additional duties does envisaging contemporary research as potential historical data place upon the researcher?

Multiple Choice Quiz Questions

[Insert three to five multiple choice quiz questions here. Each question should have only three possible answers (A, B, or C), and one correct answer. Please indicate the correct answer by writing CORRECT after the relevant answer.]

Multiple Choice Quiz Questions should test readers' understanding of your case study, and should not require any previous knowledge. They should relate to the research methodology, rather than the research findings.

1. Why did the Play Observatory research team include emojis as part of the data?

    A. To make the survey look attractive

    B. Because using emojis means that contributors won't have to write about their feelings

    C. To prompt child contributors to talk about and express their feelings about their play and give them opportunities to use images and text (CORRECT)

2. In addition to the online survey, what other research did the Play Observatory undertake?

A. Online ethnographic case studies (CORRECT)

B. Playground observation

C. Teacher focus groups

3. Why did the team decide that having a flexible approach to talking about identity with children was important?

A. Because this data was less relevant to the project, so it didn't matter what responses children gave

B. To ensure that the children could represent their identities in language that is meaningful to them (CORRECT)

C. To save time so the team didn't need to think about different categories of identity

4. Centering children as contributors to the online survey…

A. means making the survey short and limited

B. is challenging because children don't have interesting things to say about their play

C. means thinking imaginatively about how to address information to children in engaging and meaningful ways (CORRECT)

Further Reading

Please ensure content is inclusive and represents diverse voices. In your references, further readings and web resources you should aim to represent a diversity of people. We have a global readership and we want students of a wide range of perspectives to see themselves reflected in our pedagogical materials.

[Insert list of up to six further readings here]

● Aspinall, P. (2020). Ethnic/racial terminology as a form of representation: A critical review of the lexicon of collective and specific terms in use in Britain. Genealogy, 4(87). https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038511419195

- Burman, E. (2019). Fanon, education, and action : Child as method. Routledge.

- Christensen, P., & James, A. (2017). *Research with children: Perspectives and practices* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

- *Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals*. (2021),17(3).

- Opie, I., & Opie, P. (1959). *The lore and language of schoolchildren*. Oxford University Press.

- Veltri, G. A. (2019). Digital social research. Wiley.

Web Resources

[Insert links to up to six relevant web resources here]

- *A National Observatory of Children's Play Experiences During COVID-19.* http://www.play-observatory.com

- *The Iona and Peter Opie Archive*. https://www.opiearchive.org/

- Information Commissioner's Office. (2021). *Guide to the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)*. https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/

- The National Archives. (2018). *Guide to archiving personal data*. http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/guide-to-archiving-personal-data.pdf

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References should conform to American Psychological Association (APA) style, 7th edition, and should contain the digital object identifier (DOI) where available. SAGE will not accept cases that are incorrectly referenced. Please ensure accuracy before submission. For help on reference styling see https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines.

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- Schisler, E. (2020). Who loves you? Red Monster loves you! https://blog.adobe.com/en/publish/2020/02/10/who-loves-you-red-monster-loves-you#gs.fn0i4z

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