

Quick Facts

When would be a good time to use an online focus group?

Online focus groups are a great option for when you need to be flexible. They are good for when time is limited and you do not want to travel to multiple groups for a single project, as respondents, the moderator and the client do not need to physically be in the same room (or adjoining rooms). This allows you to set up groups at short notice, or to set up multiple groups in more than one location in the same day.

They are also a great way to manage multi-country groups and to reach more elusive respondents who can be more difficult to track down offline. Due to the format of the groups, they are also great ways to engage with a whole generation of respondents who interact online through social networking sites and online communications tools such as Skype.

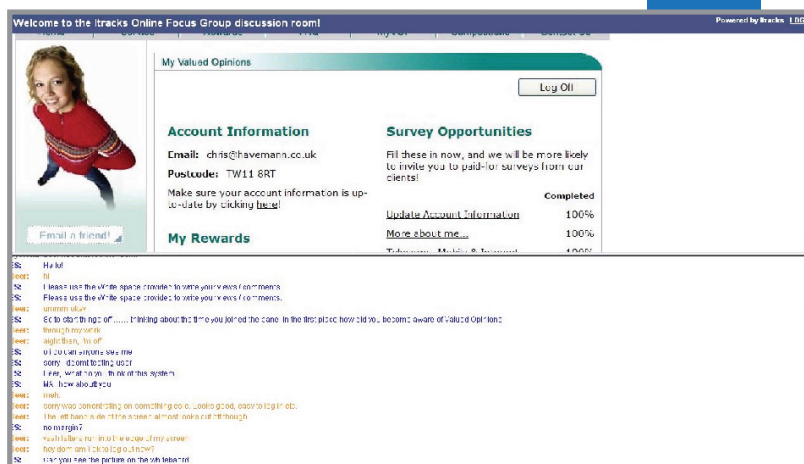
How long is an online focus group?

Focus groups are typically between 60 and 90 minutes but not necessarily limited to this timeframe. Timing will depend on the number of people you have in the group and the number of topics you want to cover. You can have multiple people commenting at the same time, so this can speed up the process to some extent.

How many people can participate?

We would recommend that as with traditional focus groups offline, you do not have too many people participating as the group can become overwhelmed. Ideally, you would have a maximum of 10 participants.

It is worth considering that the online facility is also equally good for 2 and 3-person interviews - as the set-up costs are lower for online groups, this can make smaller group options more cost-effective.



How long does it take to set an online focus group?

We can start recruiting to your group right away. It might take a couple of days to recruit harder respondents, but once we have participants lined up and we have the finalised discussion guide from you, we'll import this into the moderator's discussion screen and the group will be set up and ready to go! We can provide you with a more detailed estimate on timelines for your individual project at the planning stage.

What output do I get from the focus group?

The output is a full verbatim transcript of the group (available in word or excel). This is available immediately after the group has taken place. We can also provide the service to back-translate foreign-language groups on request.

Can I use my own moderator?

You can use your own nominated moderator enabling you to provide the client with exactly who they want for the groups. Our project managers can also provide guidance tips and a dummy trial for any offline moderators using the online facility for the first time.

Do I need to provide translations for international groups?

We can take care of translations for you (or will work with yours if you prefer). The respondent interface will be set up in the native language of the respondents.

Contact us for further information on any aspect of international online fieldwork or panels:

T +44 (0)20 7921 2400

| service@researchnow.co.uk

| service@researchnow.fr

| service@researchnow.de

| www.researchnow.co.uk

RESEARCH NOW ONLINE FOCUS GROUPS

Can I show images to the group?

Yes – images can be pre-loaded by the moderator and shown to the group at the appropriate time. You can also display videos, audio materials and online content.

How do respondents interact with each other?

Respondents see each others' responses on screen and can type their own thoughts via the respondent portal.

How are respondents recruited to the group?

Respondents are recruited via our online panels – we take your spec and screen panellists according to your criteria. We send an invitation to those that qualify to the group and then a confirmation to those that accept the invite. Recruited panellists are provided with a link to the virtual group plus an ID and password to enter the group at the appointed time. We will over-recruit to ensure that you have sufficient participants in your group.

Can the client view the group?

Yes, the client can view the group via their own portal – they can log in at any point and view all of the action from their desk.

Can the client and the moderator talk privately to each other?

Yes, the client and the moderator can correspond by passing “notes” electronically rather than physically during the course of the group.

How can respondents convey what they are really thinking via a keyboard?

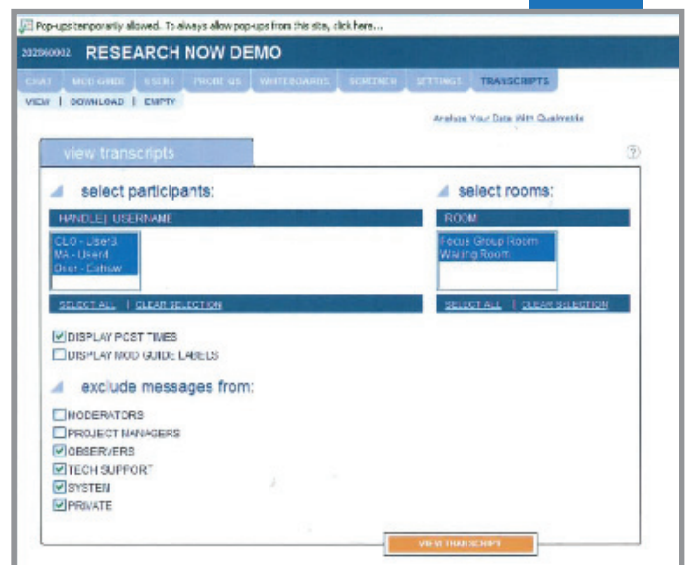
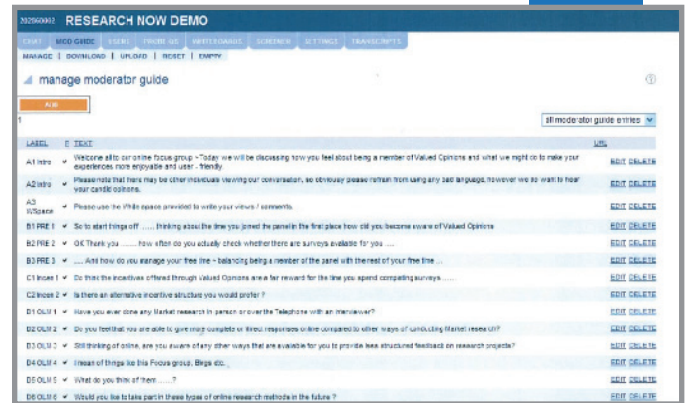
Some respondents can feel intimidated by a face-to-face group full of strangers and can feel pressurised to respond “in the right way” to the moderator’s questions. Online, there is more of a sense of anonymity, which can make some respondents feel less inhibited about expressing their viewpoints.

How are respondents incentivised?

Respondents are given an individual incentive for taking part in the group. The value of this incentive will depend on the length of the survey and the interest level of the subject matter and will be administered via the Research Now panel reward system (vouchers).

Can you invite my own contacts to the group?

Yes, we can invite your own respondents to take part in the group if you have a preferred list of attendees. We would need to follow standard data protection guidelines about contacting them and can advise on this if needed.



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