Using NVivo to Organize Literature Reviews J.J. Roth April 20, 2012



# **Goals of Literature Reviews**

- Literature reviews are a common feature of research in many different disciplines
- Literature reviews generally seek to
  - Describe methods and findings of previous research
  - Highlight significant themes
  - Note areas needing further research
- Accomplishing these tasks requires organizing what is often a large body of research

# Choosing an Organizational Method

- Variety of options for organizing the literature
  - Some researchers create large tables in Microsoft Word
  - Another option is NVivo, a software program designed to assist with qualitative analysis
  - Personal preference matters
    - Use a system that makes sense to you

## Literature Reviews as Content Analysis

- DiGregorio (2000) in both content analysis and literature reviews, the researcher:
  - Reads and comments on the literature/data
  - Identifies key themes
  - Extracts the 'gold dust' quotes to be used when writing
  - Identifies contradictions in arguments
  - Compares dissimilarities in articles/transcripts
- NVivo is specifically designed for these kinds of tasks

## Goals of this Presentation

- Describe how NVivo can help you organize the literature
- Briefly demonstrate the basic processes of NVivo
- Provide resources for future reference
  - Handouts with step-by-step instructions
  - Link to NVivo tutorials

#### NVivo Terminology

- Sources content to analyze
  - Journal articles, researchers' notes, interview transcripts
- Nodes organizational categories representing themes and other important points
  - "Buckets" for content
- Coding process of placing pieces of sources into the nodes

## Getting the Literature into NVivo

Three options for placing content into NVivo

- 1. Import articles
- 2. As you read, type notes in external documents, then import those documents
- 3. As you read, type notes in NVivo documents

## **Option One: Importing Articles**

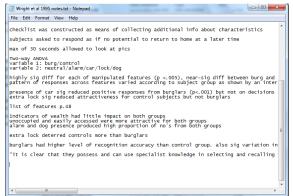
- Import journal articles and other sources
  - A copy is saved within the NVivo project
- Advantage
  - Can code the articles themselves, aren't required to type notes
- Disadvantages
  - Image .pdf files are not compatible with NVivo
  - You'll still end up typing some notes for image .pdfs and hard copy sources like books
  - Increases the size of the Nvivo file

## **Option One: Importing Articles**

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#### **Option Two: Notes in External Documents**

- As you read, note important information and type it into a text document
- Then import those documents using the same process as for articles



## Option Two: Notes in External Documents

#### Advantages

- You can include your own commentary on the article in these files
- Reduces size of NVivo file
- Notes will be accessible on computers without NVivo installed
- Disadvantage
  - Creating notes about each article
    - Copy/paste from small pieces from the articles when you can

# **Option Three: Notes in NVivo**

- You can also type notes directly into NVivo
- Advantage
  - Bypasses the import process
- Disadvantage
  - Still required to create notes on each article
  - You will be unable to open these notes on computers that do not have NVivo installed

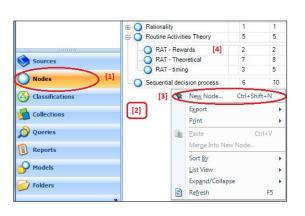
# **Option Three: Notes in NVivo**

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# Coding the Literature

- Sources or notes are into NVivo. Now what?
- Organize the content by placing pieces of text into buckets
- In NVivo, the process of placing text into buckets is called "coding," and NVivo calls these buckets "nodes"

#### Coding the Literature



- To create nodes, click the "Nodes" group [1], then right-click in the white area [2], then select "New Node" [3]
- If you right-click on an existing node, the new node will be created as a sub-node of that existing node [4]

## Coding the Literature

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- To code, first open a source
- Regardless of which method you used to place content into NVivo, you can open a source by clicking the "Sources" group [1], then the "Internals" folder [2], and then a particular source [3].
- Notice that file name becomes the document name in NVivo, and so "Author\_Year" format for file names is recommended

## Coding the Literature

- Once a source is open, highlight a piece of text to code [1]
- Type the beginning of a node name in the coding bar at the bottom and select the appropriate node from the list that appears [2]
- Then hit the "Enter" key or click the green check mark [3]
- Pieces of text can be coded to multiple nodes
- · See illustration on next slide

## Coding the Literature

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# **Coding Recommendations**

- You may find that after a first attempt at coding, some of the nodes contain too much text to be very useful
- In these cases you can create sub-nodes under the larger node, recode material to these subnodes, and uncode it from the larger one

## **Re-Coding to New Nodes**

- Double-click on a node to open it [1]
- Highlight a piece of text to recode [2]
- Right-click on the highlighted text, and in the pop-up menu select "Uncode selection" [3]
- At this point you have two options
  - Clicking "Uncode selection at existing nodes" [4a] will uncode the selected text from all nodes
  - Clicking "Uncode selection this node" will uncode the selected text only from the current node [4b]

# Re-Coding to New Nodes

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## **Printing Nodes**

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- Click the "Collections" group
- Then select the "All Nodes" folder
- Right-click on the node you want to print, then select "Print" followed by "Print Node"

# **Printing Nodes**

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- The "Print Options" window appears
- Select "Reference View" [1]
- Check the "Name" box [2], and select "Name Only" [3]
- Then click "OK" [4]
- NVivo will then ask you to select a printer before printing the node

## **Additional Resources**

- Short video tutorials for NVivo are available at <u>http://www.qsrinternational.com/support\_tutori</u> <u>als.aspx?productid=20</u>
- NVivo can be downloaded at no cost by IUP students and faculty from <u>http://www.iup.edu/itsupportcenter/howto.aspx</u> <u>?id=87835</u>
- NVivo is also installed on public computers on IUP campuses

This presentation was inspired by:

di Gregorio, S. (2000). *"Using NVivo for Your Literature Review."* Paper presented at Strategies in Qualitative Research: Issues and Results from Analysis using QSR NVivo and Nud\*ist conference at the Institute of Education, London.

#### Contacting the ARL

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