

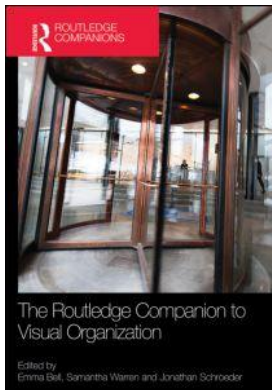
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Using videoethnography to study entrepreneurship

Jean Clarke

Introduction

Organizational research has historically privileged text-based forms of communication over visual forms with most qualitative research in organizations focused on textual data-gathering techniques and representations, such as transcribed interviews and verbal observations of visual events published in text-based journals (Clarke 2011). This has led to a paradoxical situation where the majority of qualitative organizational research is based on text-based descriptions of situations, interactions and events, which originally took place in 'visual' and 'embodied' contexts (Hassard *et al.* 2000). While little attention has been given to visual methodologies in organizational research, in contrast, visual sociologists and anthropologists have a longstanding tradition stretching back over a hundred years of using photography, film and video as part of data collection and representation (Becker 1998; Harper 1989; McDougall 1997; Mead 1995; Prins 2002). More recently, there has been a reinvigorated 'visual turn' across the social sciences with the growing recognition that the visual is 'a pervasive feature not only of social life but of many aspects of social enquiry as well' (Emmison and Smith 2000: 2). As Secrist *et al.* (2002) highlight, despite all the thick description and linguistic detail researchers provide, words alone are often simply not enough to communicate the complex interactions that they encounter.

This has led to a burgeoning of interest in what visual methods may add to current text-based approaches, and the last two decades have witnessed a rapid growth in visual research in this domain (Prosser and Loxley 2007). This new wealth of academic scholarship includes journals such as *Visual Studies* and *Visual Communication*, and highly profiled international conferences, which offer insights into investigating the role that visual aspects of communication play in our cultural and societal lives. Despite this, many researchers of organizations remain suspicious over the utility of visual images, arguing that visual methods are subjective, partial and ultimately too difficult to interpret conclusively for any 'valid' research project. It seems, just as qualitative methodologies used for decades by our social science counterparts were once discounted by organizational researchers as being largely subjective and lacking 'validity' and transparency (Bryman 1994), visual methodologies currently appear to be enduring the same treatment. However, a small but growing community has started to make some inroads into incorporating visual research in organizational studies. This is evidenced by the increasing,

if sporadic, examples of the use of visual approaches such as photographic representation into research designs (e.g. Buchanan 2001; Guthey and Jackson 2005; Warren 2002, 2009). Guthey and Jackson (2005), for example, examine the use of CEO portraits in the visual construction of corporate identity and image. These studies have begun to show that, by ignoring understandings in the visual domain, we continue to neglect a whole dimension of rich information about organizational processes.

One noticeable absence in these visual approaches to organization studies is any evidence of audio-visual material being encompassed into research designs. Video first emerged as a methodology alongside a developing tradition in ethnographic filmmaking that began in the mid-twentieth century (Ruby 1996). Aside from this specialist field, until recently, using video as a methodology remained quite rare, as the technical expertise and equipment it required made it prohibitively expensive for the majority of researchers (Harrison 2002). New technical innovations have now made it much easier for researchers to incorporate moving images into research designs (Heath and Hindmarsh 2002). The new digital video cameras are small, affordable and easy to use, and create good quality audio and visual data, which can be transferred on to a computer and edited easily and quickly. Video-based designs are now widely incorporated into a variety of social science disciplines interested in the ongoing production of social life and the interactions between people, artefacts and their environment (Shrum *et al.* 2005). More than ever before, participants are also willing to be videotaped, so accustomed are they to constant surveillance through CCTV and the ubiquity of amateur videos captured on mobile phones and handheld devices. Given these changing cultural and technological conditions and the potential video has to enhance the quality and insights of organizational research, it seems logical that we should become more methodologically capable in using this technology.

The goal of this chapter is to show how video may be incorporated into organizational research through an example of a video-based ethnography of three entrepreneurs. While a detailed discussion of this study can be viewed elsewhere (see Clarke 2011), here I wish to discuss some of the more 'messy' aspects of conducting this type of research that we don't have the space and perhaps the inclination to put into our journal articles – research is very rarely as sterile, ordered and clinical as it appears in journal form. Following a brief overview of the research upon which this chapter is based that outlines why it is important to examine the visual in interactions between entrepreneurs and their stakeholders, the chapter then considers the pragmatic, methodological and ethical dilemmas or problems that surround the collection of video-based data. This overview of an application and evaluation of a video-based ethnographic approach will benefit organizational researchers interested in understanding the constraints and opportunities associated with this kind of methodology.

Visual symbols in entrepreneurial interactions

Accessing adequate financial, material and human resources is regarded as central to the process of entrepreneurship, given that the vast majority of entrepreneurs are likely at some point to be faced with the challenge of obtaining external investment to initiate or expand their entrepreneurial venture (Starr and MacMillan 1990; Zott and Huy 2007). Yet entrepreneurs are likely to face much greater problems in engaging potential resource providers in their entrepreneurial ideas than those in more established organizations. This problem relates to the 'liability of newness' (Stinchcombe 1965) where resource providers are likely to be reluctant to become part of any novel or unorthodox undertaking for which there is no conclusive evidence that their efforts will eventually be rewarded (Brush *et al.* 2001). This liability is compounded by the information asymmetry (Zott and Huy 2007) between an entrepreneur and external resource

providers in relation to the potential of a novel venture (Shane 2003). In an attempt to explain how entrepreneurs overcome the liabilities they face, many entrepreneurship scholars have turned to the literature on organizational legitimacy (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001; Zimmerman and Zeitz 2002). The development of legitimacy is seen as a social process whereby the entrepreneurial idea is judged and valued in relation to the cultural context resulting in a 'generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, beliefs and definitions' (Suchman 1995: 574). Entrepreneurs who are seen as legitimate benefit from this cultural support through having a higher probability of securing vital resources, while those who lack legitimacy are more vulnerable to their entrepreneurial ideas being viewed as 'negligent, irrational or unnecessary' (Meyer and Rowan 1991: 50).

Various symbols that legitimize entrepreneurial ventures have been identified, such as prior education and the calibre of the entrepreneur and founding team (Packalen 2007); the alignment of new ventures with traditional understandings of organizational forms (Tornikoski and Newbert 2007); use of rational business planning techniques (Delmar and Shane 2004); and certificates and endorsements (Rao 1994). While the cultural and symbolic dimensions of organizational forms and quality signals can make the new venture familiar and credible to key groups (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001), simply displaying certain organizational arrangements and appropriate signs of quality offers little insight into how entrepreneurs institute unorthodox or novel business forms or the actions entrepreneurs take to overcome a lack of certain quality symbols (Martens *et al.* 2007). Entrepreneurs must also be able to use these symbols effectively to persuade stakeholders of their venture's legitimacy during presentations and other interactions (e.g. Baron and Brush 1999). Some research has focused on how entrepreneurs use linguistic devices such as narrative, framing, and metaphor (Clarke and Holt 2010; Cornelissen and Clarke 2010; Martens *et al.* 2007) to symbolically represent their ventures as 'compatible with more widely established sets of activities' (Aldrich and Fiol 1994: 652). For example, Cornelissen and Clarke (2010) show how, in creating novel ventures, entrepreneurs use analogy and metaphor to make their new venture familiar to others by framing the venture in terms that are understandable and thus legitimate. However, as yet, no research has been conducted on how visual symbols are used in entrepreneurs' interactions with stakeholders.

From an impression management perspective, communication activities extend well beyond the use of traditional discourse, to include a wide range of meaning-laden actions and symbolic displays. Goffman (1959) uses the term performance to refer to the activities of an individual, which serves to influence a set of observers and suggests that individuals have the capacity to manage others' impressions through two different kinds of activity: (1) the expression that they give, which may be seen to be rooted in the language they use; and (2) the expression they give off, which relates to non-linguistic or visual aspects of this process (Goffman 1959). Gardner and Avolio similarly emphasize the integral role that visual symbols play in managing impressions, which they propose directs attention to the development and manipulation of 'physical appearances, settings, props and other types of artefactual displays' (1998: 43). This research suggests that human experience is never simply a linguistic experience, and that we use multiple modes of discourse to organize and communicate (Iedema 2007; Philips *et al.* 2004). In relation to this in the entrepreneurship domain, a number of theorists have highlighted the importance of what is being referred to as 'social competence', which emphasizes the importance of social skills that relate to entrepreneurial success (e.g. Baron and Brush 1999; Baron and Markman 2003; Chen *et al.* 2009; Cornelissen *et al.* 2012; Mason and Harrison 2000). The idea of social competence goes beyond ideas of persuasion through linguistic domains; as Vecchio outlines, social competence

encompass[es] the ability to correctly gauge the current moods or emotions of others, proficiency in inducing positive reactions in others by enhancing one's own appearance and image, effectiveness in persuasion, and the ability to adjust to a range of social situations with a range of individuals.

(2003: 318)

The suggestion here is that entrepreneurship is an act of impression management, where the 'mood' of the audience must be gauged before any activities take place, and a number of tools applied, including but not limited to language, in order to accomplish the given task of engaging others in the venture.

In an attempt to access these non-linguistic dimensions of entrepreneurs' impression management, I conducted a study that investigated how entrepreneurs used visual symbols persuasively in their efforts to secure resources for their novel ventures (Clarke 2011). This was achieved through conducting a video-based ethnographic study (Pink 2001) of three male entrepreneurs in the North of England who were in the early stages of venture commercialization and seeking to attract funding. While the entrepreneurs involved in this study came from highly diverse industries and contexts, they all employed similar processes to create meaning visually. In particular, the data showed that a wide range of visual activities and physical or material contexts were used by the entrepreneurs in this study to convey symbolic meanings to others in their context, including their clothing, physical surroundings, such as their built environments, and artefacts, such as high-status vehicles and interior decor. The manipulation of these visual symbols helped entrepreneurs access much-needed resources through addressing low levels of legitimacy that typically exist when novel ventures are launched (e.g. Aldrich and Fiol 1994). By studying in detail across an extended period of time how entrepreneurs use the visual to persuade stakeholders to invest in their venture, this study shows that language is likely to be only one of the communication tools used by entrepreneurs. This expands previous understandings by accounting for how entrepreneurs create meanings outside the linguistic domain and illustrates the importance of bodily, material and physical modes of communication in the entrepreneurship process. It also suggests that future theoretical insights in the entrepreneurship domain should aim to account for how entrepreneurs engage others in their venture through visual modes of meaning-making. Now I turn to the collection and analysis of the video data and how the problems and issues I encountered along the way were overcome.

Introducing the camera

One of the main questions I am asked when I talk about this research is: 'How on earth did you get three busy entrepreneurs to agree that you could follow them around with a video camera!?' Initially, an email was sent to over a hundred entrepreneurs listed on a university database, explaining that I was interested in how entrepreneurs successfully accessed resources for new ventures. It also outlined the length of time that would be spent within the organization and stipulated that the entrepreneur needed to be in the process of commercializing a new technology/venture for which they were currently trying to attract funding. The use of the video camera was not mentioned at this stage, as I suspected that this would immediately discourage a large number of the entrepreneurs on the database from taking part. Videotaping the entrepreneurs was only discussed once I had selected the cases and met the participants in person. Surprisingly, perhaps, all three entrepreneurs accepted the use of the video, possibly because there was already some commitment on their part and they had become familiar with me through email and telephone conversations and trusted me and my motives to some degree.

Despite their agreement, I didn't introduce the camera immediately once I began fieldwork. The success of ethnography depends on the researcher developing and maintaining a positive personal relationship with participants and it was thought that to immediately introduce an intrusive device like a video camera could potentially damage the level of access to participants (Shrum *et al.* 2005). Over these first few days, I had many casual conversations with the entrepreneurs, employees and customers about my research and my interest in resource acquisition. I also explained that, in order to really understand these processes, I needed to video-record them during interactions; however, I didn't mention I was particularly interested in the visual aspects of this process as I wanted to limit my impact on the behaviour of participants as much as possible. One of the entrepreneurs compared my research to the BBC pseudo-documentary-style comedy series *The Office*, jokingly saying that he hoped he wouldn't be portrayed as a David Brent-style character – the irritating and offensive white-collar office middle manager and principal character of the series. While it was said humorously, these kinds of comparisons enabled participants to engage with the use of the video camera and, to some extent, to even enjoy the process of being observed and filmed.

Capturing natural interactions

It was also essential during those first few days in the organizations to begin to identify expectable patterns of action and analyse the situation even before the action took place (Mondala 2006). Following Collier and Collier's advice that 'good video and film records for research are ultimately the product of observation that is organised and consistent' (1986: 149), I explored a range of issues prior to capturing the videotaped data, including the optimum distance for researchers to videotape participants and the type of camera angle and view that is least distracting to participants (e.g. Collier and Collier 1986; Prosser 1998). These choices about perspectives and spots from which to record action often depend as much on technical and situational constraints (such as the length of the videotapes used, the possibility of placing the cameras in difficult angles and locations, etc.) as they do on research goals. As researchers, we must work within the constraints of the environment and adapt our data collection approaches as effectively as we can.

The camera used was the Sony Digital Camera Recorder HC94, which collected images onto mini DV tapes of up to 90 minutes. The technology has moved on somewhat from when I recorded the data and DV tapes are less often used now. Most people use hard drive or flash memory camcorders, which store videos as data files to a built-in hard drive or microchip, which can be directly transferred in file format on to a PC. The camera I used also had an LCD screen that could be flipped out so that I could view the scene as it unfolded and also what I was recording. As Pink (2001) argues, this creates distance between the researcher's eye and the camera, allowing the researcher to maintain better eye contact with participants as the camera is not hiding their face. At the same time, they can continue to view the scene unfolding through the LCD screen and assess whether the material that is being captured is usable and viewable. I found this aspect of the LCD screen particularly useful, as it allowed me to interview and question participants in a normal manner without having an instrument obscuring my face. The camera easily sat in the palm of my hand and participants often remarked that they had forgotten the camera was there. In meetings or at other times when I was involved in the research activity and therefore could not hold the video camera, it was positioned on a tripod in order to capture the interaction. Also, pragmatically, the video camera cannot be held for long periods of time as it is very tiring on the arms, so a tripod is definitely an essential tool of any would-be videoethnographer!

Although the camera was ideal in the situations described above where participants were sitting in meetings, or talking to me on a one-to-one basis, organizations are also noisy, busy places – people do not wait their turn to speak and are highly mobile and able to move out of view of the camera very easily. A larger microphone was introduced, which was attached to the camera in meetings, which helped to overcome the problem of multiple speakers as it allowed me to zoom into a particular speaker's dialogue. Yet it is difficult to capture the many events going on at the same time and the researcher needs to make constant judgements about the focus of attention and what should be recorded (Jordan and Henderson 1995). This is particularly problematic when the camera is situated on the tripod and therefore cannot adapt to these changes in conditions very easily – as Macbeth (1999) puts it, the camera cannot glance, it can only stare. Over the course of any ethnographic study, interaction is likely to take place sporadically and unannounced at any given moment in a number of different locations. Short of setting up some type of *Big Brother* environment, where cameras point in every direction, making no space unobservable, it is impossible to ensure that the researcher will always be close to where the interaction (or action!) occurs. This means that some degree of analysis is therefore taking place even as the material is being recorded, as the researcher must make online judgements about where to locate their focus of attention, which are never made explicit in the reporting of the research. The problem for researchers is that such decisions are made instantaneously and important interactions cannot be recaptured if they are missed (Plowman 1996).

In relation to this, the main criticism levelled at this type of research is the influence that the researcher and their video camera have on the unfolding interactions. It is argued that participants will not 'act naturally' when the camera is around and, hence, the material that is collected is not representative of participants' 'normal' behaviour. In this project, I attempted as much as possible to reduce the 'reactivity' of participants (Harrison 2002; Prosser 1998). Given that I was placed in each organization for an extended period, over time the participants became accustomed to the use of the video camera and reacted less to its presence. Of course, this criticism cannot completely be dismissed and debates about whether research really represents 'reality' and 'truth' are evident across all types of ethnographic research. While we must strive to be as objective as possible, we must work on the assumption that we can only see 'with' the camera and not 'through it' (Büscher 2005). The choices we, as researchers, make about what and who should be recorded and our impact on the participants cannot be truly accounted for. For these reasons, we can never illustrate the whole situation but must make do with an account that is partial and constructed (Atkinson 1990; Watson 2000).

Ethical issues in video-based research

Incorporating a visual dimension into research projects also undoubtedly extends the ethical dilemmas inherent in the research process (Pink 2001). In particular, in visual research, it is not possible to protect participants' identities to the same extent as in a solely textual study, as people's faces and places of work are potentially identifiable. Although consent was obtained from the entrepreneurs and all other 'actors' who were to be videotaped, it became clear as the study unfolded that the use of a video camera was unacceptable to participants in certain organizational situations. For example, in one situation of conflict where tensions were running particularly high, I was asked to turn off the video camera but allowed to witness the event myself. On other occasions where sensitive material was being discussed, I was invited to join the discussion but asked not to videotape these interactions. Organizational participants are, therefore, often uncomfortable with the use of video in situations that we as researchers find

interesting and informative, perhaps recognizing how insightful the tangible, concrete nature of a moving image can be. This emphasizes the importance of incorporating textual fieldnotes into visual research projects, as this ensures the researcher can, to some extent, record interactions and make observations in places where the video camera is forbidden (Clarke 2007).

Drawing on her experience of applying a video-based research approach in anthropological settings, Pink (2001) argues that it is difficult for researchers to have predetermined ideas and expectations of what they will be able to achieve through the use of visual methodologies in any research context. She proposes that it is often better to negotiate ethical issues as they appear in the field rather than having a fixed strategy (Pink 2001). Drawing on Simons and Usher's (2000) ideas on 'situated ethics', Flewitt (2006) argues that, rather than asking for 'informed consent' in video-based research, it is better to work with the idea of 'provisional consent'. Such an ethical stance evolves out of researcher/participant relationships where ethical dilemmas are resolved as they emerge in the field, in their local and specific contexts (Flewitt 2006). So, rather than adopting predetermined and fixed sets of values prior to the video-based research, we should respond reflexively to situations as we encounter them in the field. This is the approach that I adopted with my participants and we continually negotiated ideas of consent throughout the study. All participants were aware that they could stop the videotaping at any stage they felt uncomfortable or did not want the interaction to be recorded. Even now, if I want to use this material for conferences or other presentations, I will contact the individuals involved and ensure they are still happy for me to continue using the material captured in their organizations.

Analysing video data

Analysis of video can take multiple paths and will relate to the particular focus of your study and your research question (see van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2001 for a very useful overview of the various types of visual analysis). For example, if you focus in on the micro-dynamics of interactions, an in-depth analysis of the particular facial movements, body language and turn-taking may be required (e.g. Goodwin 2003; McNeill 2000). I have conducted an analysis of this kind, detailed elsewhere, which examined how entrepreneurs use hand gestures to communicate during interactions with stakeholders (see Cornelissen *et al.* 2012). For the purposes of the study outlined here, the focus was on entrepreneurs' use of visual symbols, so the micro-detail of their interactions and body movements was not as important. Rather, attention was focused on how they employed visual symbols during interactions with stakeholders and in interviews with the researcher. In addition, this was supplemented by instances when they *verbally* referred to their use of visual symbols and their importance. The sheer quantity of data that is collected using a visual ethnographic approach can feel overwhelming for a researcher new to this methodology and it is necessary to use your research questions to focus and guide what you're looking for. The researcher should, however, also try to remain open to unexpected or surprising results emerging from the videos. Many hours of mundane and uninteresting data may need to be observed before stumbling onto data that is useful and insightful. In this case, given the extensive amount of videotaped interactions generated over a total period of three months, it was necessary to reduce the data to material that was relevant to the research question. In order to facilitate and focus the analysis, I initially examined all of the video data and excluded any interactions where visual symbols were not relevant or important.

Approximately 60 hours of 'raw' videotaped interviews and interactions were transferred on to Windows Movie Maker, a free video-editing software system included in recent versions of

Microsoft Windows. The initial part of the analysis required me to repeatedly watch the videos, read the transcripts (annotated with notes from the videos) and fieldnotes, and examine collected documentation in order to become familiar with the data. A comprehensive write-up of each case was undertaken as a means of organizing my initial thoughts about each of the cases (Eisenhardt 1989). This allowed me to become familiar with each case as a standalone entity and allowed the unique patterns of each case to emerge before I moved towards generalizing across the cases (Zott and Huy 2007). This second part of the analysis involved a cross-case search for patterns. Each of the cases was compared in pairs, and the similarities and differences between each pair were listed. For example, the cases were compared in terms of previous experience, industry knowledge, occasions when visual symbols were used, and how frequently visual symbols were employed. This tactic forces the researcher to look for the subtle similarities and differences between the cases to go beyond mere impressions (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Miles and Huberman 1984). The next step of this process was to compare systematically the emerging dimensions with the evidence from each case in order to assess how well it fits with case data. Overall, six processes emerged: (1) concealment of setting; (2) exposure to setting; (3) wearing of business dress; (4) adapting dress to audience; (5) controlling personal expressiveness; and (6) managing stakeholders' emotions. Gradually, these six sub-categories were grouped into three, according to the function they fulfilled. For example, entrepreneurs' 'exposure' and 'concealment' of visual symbols were grouped together, as both processes function to control the visual scene that stakeholders are presented with, and are grouped under 'presenting an appropriate scene to stakeholders'. In total, three functions of visual symbols emerged: (1) presenting an appropriate scene to stakeholders; (2) creating professional identity and emphasizing control; and (3) regulating emotions.

Translating the data: transcription, analysis and publication

While it is necessary in order to code the data, in transforming video data into easily accessible, paper-based material for analysis, some of the richness of the original recording is lost. It is not fully possible to articulate through language a sense of the individual entrepreneurs and their idiosyncratic use of their visual surroundings without actually viewing the videotaped interactions. As Veer argues in Chapter 13 in this volume, 'to express what New Delhi's streets looked and sounded like, I could write thousands of words and not do the site justice'. The visceral nature of visual imagery often results in an inability to (verbally) articulate all that we find interesting about visual data and these preverbal, visceral hunches 'remain at the level of vague suspicion and intuitive response' (Iedema 2001: 201). In addition, while transcription is often treated as a practical, objective matter of simply scripting what participants said, the process of transcribing is also an act of representation (Oliver *et al.* 2005). This is particularly the case with video research, as the visual images need to be translated to another medium (i.e. text) to facilitate interrogation, and information is inevitably lost in the process. Our ability to transcribe talk is built upon a process of analysing relevant structure in the stream of speech and marking these distinctions with widely accepted written symbols that extend back thousands of years (i.e. text) (Goodwin 2001). In the case of transcribing visual phenomena, we are not so sophisticated, and, to make sense of visual data, we often translate our thought about the visual to text in order to record our evaluation of and insights into the visual material we are examining.

It is not only the practices and methods by which video-recordings are transcribed and analysed but also how they are edited and presented to an external audience in the form of a multimedia presentation or an ethnographic film. Representations are constructed through a process of selecting and excluding data and privileging different modes of communication,

thereby presenting different perspectives on ‘reality’ (Plowman and Stephen 2008). This transformation of the data not only occurs during the process of analysis but also during the process of representing the outcomes of this analysis for dissemination to others. At conferences or seminars, it has been possible to show fellow academics the videos on which the findings of this study are built, yet in the article now published in *the Journal of Management Studies* (Clarke 2011) the videos were not produced. Given the newness of this type of study, there were no prior protocols for how these types of data could be represented. One suggestion was to have a link to the video embedded in the online version of the paper but the entrepreneurs involved in my study were against any suggestion of these videos being placed freely on the web. It may have been possible to print photographic stills of the recording but these do not illustrate effectively the complex video interactions. One solution to these problems would be to find ways of maintaining the original video format and avoid the loss of meaning by translating the images into text. A potential way of overcoming this is to begin using web-based ‘papers’, which integrate video sequences with written text and still images into one document (Olivero *et al.* 2004). This opportunity to view the raw material upon which observations are based allows a researcher’s analysis to be scrutinized, adding another dimension of reflexivity to the research, as the author is not standing between the informants and the audience (Strecker 1997). With the advent of online journals, it may become increasingly common to integrate video-based research into published form, but at the moment this remains quite rare particularly in the domain of management studies.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the deficiencies in a text-only approach to research and illustrated the potential utility of visual methodologies in the organizational domain through the example of a videoethnographic study in the field of entrepreneurship. By studying in detail, through the means of a videoethnographic approach, how entrepreneurs use their visual surroundings during interactions with stakeholders, this chapter and the study on which it is based show that language is only one of the symbols used by entrepreneurs. Using video allowed me to subject the data to repeated examination through the use of slow motion, still frames and zooming features, and created an enormous amount of micro-detail that could not have been caught through text as the situation emerged. These findings would therefore not have emerged if a video-based approach had not been incorporated into this research. Video produces data that can uniquely add to many research designs (Radcliffe 2003). Video can allow researchers to ‘capture’ interaction and behaviour in everyday settings, as well as allowing the researcher to once again experience the actual events as they occurred, which could not be provided by fieldnotes or audio tapes alone. The data produced can be micro-analysed allowing researchers to track the emergence of gesture, the use of artefacts, how participants interact with their environment, making it an ideal method for a range of research objectives and theoretical approaches. Images do not even need to be the focus of attention or topic to warrant researchers using video-based data. As Pink (2001) highlights, the relation of images to other sensory, material and linguistic details of the study will result in images potentially being of interest to most qualitative researchers.

While this methodology promises to bring new insights into our research investigations, the benefits of video-based data must also be tempered with a discussion of limitations of video-based methodologies. No hegemonic claims are being made about the superiority of video-based approaches over other types of research – video and other visual data should not replace text-based approaches, but rather they should be used as a complementary and additional source of data. Videoethnography is simply another tool in the organizational researcher’s toolkit to be

used alongside and to supplement other research methodologies. In particular, it is important to recognize that this form of research requires a skilled researcher who can record material, while at the same time probing participants for understandings, and reflect on the material as it is being captured. Other issues include access problems, methodological issues and issues of representation when translating the data. The aim of this chapter was to address several concerns for scholars considering this technique. Without more thought and discussion about these issues, it is not possible to come up with hard and fast answers about what is and is not appropriate with video-based research. In particular, there remains a raft of ethical and moral questions about video-based research, which need to be addressed before this technique becomes integrated into the way we conduct research. Despite these problems, what is clear is that it is highly probable that there are elements that a solely textual approach to the study of organizations may ignore, and applying such a methodology is likely to create fascinating insights into how organizational interactions are steeped in visual meaning.

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