The self-interview: a new method in social science research
Emily Keightley*, Michael Pickering and Nicola Allett
Introduction

- **Memory studies research:** investigates *process* of remembering
- **The ‘self-interview:’**
  - Incorporates long pauses and discursive disruption
  - Records both practices of remembering and reflection on them without imposing restrictive genre conventions on responses
  - Retains a focus on the dynamic relations between individual and social dimensions of remembering
- **Two key topics under investigation:**
  1. Use of media technologies in everyday life for the purposes of self-representation, along with individual and small group identity maintenance (pictures and music)
  2. Facilitation and fostering of acts and practices of remembering in people’s lives through these technologies
Self-Interview Procedure

- Respondents asked to interview themselves
- Recorded themselves talking about photographs and recorded music and the ways in which they operated as vehicles of memory in their lives
- **Benefit of Self-Interview:** Allows respondents sufficient time to think and recall memories
Results

- Disruptions were actively recorded—provided insights to ways in which remembering

- Clearly records the act of remembering—i.e. The phrase ‘I can feel – it was a hot day’ communicates that senses are located in the present, but the memory is located in the past

- Physical absence of an interviewer allows articulating connections between various memories and facilitates a participant’s talking while moving around
Experiments demonstrate the interviewee speaking directly to an imagined interviewer

Absence of polite conversational structure allows additional space for them to reflect on memories without feeling immediate pressure to respond

Not effective if respondents are not comfortable ‘talking to themselves’

Researcher cannot ask for elaboration or explanation during the interview
Conclusion

Self-interviewing is a useful methodological tool for memory studies that allows participants sufficient time to think and recall memories without feeling pressure from an interviewer.