# Your Guide to App-Based Consumer Research:
## Is it Right for Your Project?

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App-based research tools allow you to conduct qualitative research in multiple cities, even countries, at the same time for substantially less than the price of traditional, in-person research. They shorten overall project time and allow for delivery of findings and recommendations weeks ahead of your current schedule.

These tools were just beginning to take off when the COVID pandemic threw a wrench into just about everyone's business. At that time, we had only used these tools on a few projects and always in conjunction with our other methods. Now, after using app-based research tools on a variety of projects, we're happy to report that they're here to stay, and we know you'll love them as much as we and our clients do!
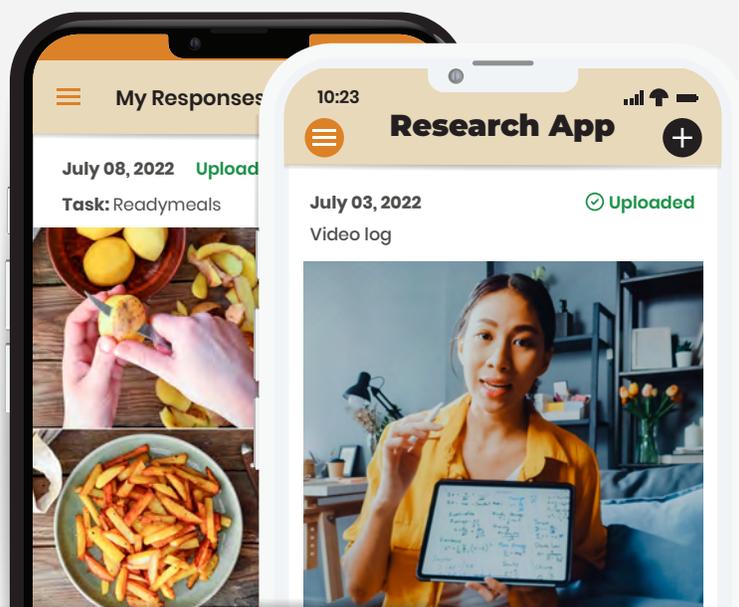


Collect customer video responses through
smartphones and a proprietary app

# How Does It Work?

App-based research takes traditional tools of qualitative research and integrates them into an easy-to-use smartphone application. Your research partner or team still identifies the participants, develops the research plan and activities, and oversees use of the research application. They'll customize each app-based inquiry to meet your project needs and deliver a series of tasks for participants to complete as they engage in your research.

# What Can You Do in an App?

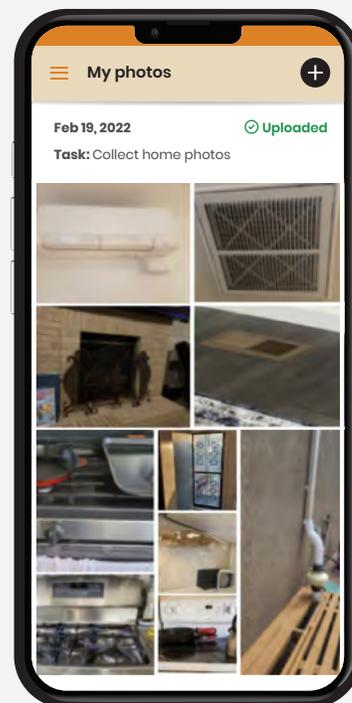We've used app-based research tools to:

- Collect short video responses to research questions, draft/concept work, and online videos
- Collect photos from participants' homes and workplaces
- Collect text diary responses
- Drive participants to surveys
- Allow a customer to document their journey through any experience – at home, at work, or out in the world
- Record screens and walkthroughs while participants navigate other apps

# What Types of Projects Can You do in an App?

We've used app-based research tools on a variety of projects. The tools have helped us uncover:

- The planning process for a kitchen remodel
- How to improve a mobile online shopping experience
- Messaging to support the use of electricity over gas in the home
- Voters' prioritization of issues and why
- A day-in-the-life study of patients living with disease

Images collected during a home upgrade study
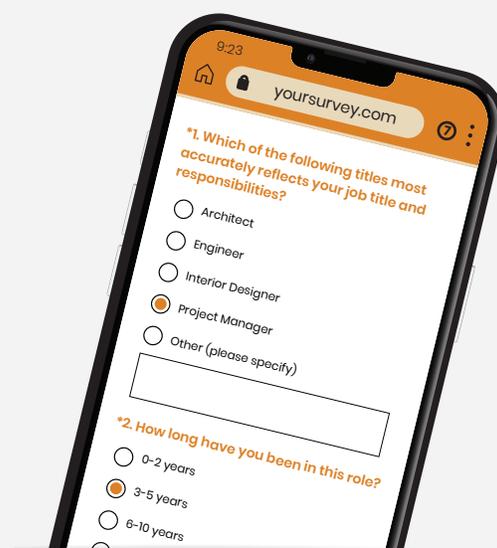
Direct participants to surveys, websites, and other media

# Why Should You Be Interested?

With app-based research tools, you can:

- Extend your geographic reach without extending travel budgets
- Reduce timelines to get quick insights
- See and hear your customers/public through shareable video, audio, and photos
- Gain access to your customers' homes and workplaces to see your products in action
- Watch people navigate your app through screen recording
- Collect data asynchronously so you can adjust your method and questions on the fly

**In addition to all these benefits, they work!** We find that research apps provide the quality and depth of data and insights that we require to make confident recommendations to our clients. They allow us to use our strengths as researchers – expert engagement with targeted audience members and over 20 years of experience finding actionable insights in qualitative data – through consumer-friendly tools.

## What next?

If you'd like to learn more about how to integrate app-based research tools into your research program or use these tools in place of an in-person project, contact us and we'll be happy to brainstorm an opportunity and approach with you.

# About Consumer Research Associates

David Shaw and Scott Webber earned their PhDs in Mass Communication Research at the University of Colorado where they specialized in qualitative and ethnographic audience research. Since founding CRA in 2009, David and Scott have completed hundreds of research projects and conducted thousands of research interactions in Colorado, the U.S., and abroad.

Scott and David bring an academic rigor and practical outlook to all client projects, yielding decisive, research-based recommendations to guide client decision making.

> We are researchers, message makers, and strategists. We uncover the stories that the numbers don't tell you so you can understand, inform, and persuade your audience.

# Our Methods

We specialize in qualitative research methods that bring you closer to the people you need to know and understand.

**Focus groups** - in a facility, in your space, online

**One-on-one interviews** - with stakeholders, key opinion leaders, customers, voters

**App-based inquiry** - expand your geography and collect rich, multimedia data from participants

**Ethnography and "day in the life" studies** - deep insights through in-depth engagement with targeted participants

# Commercial Work

Through research, we help companies understand their current and potential audiences to help inform audience expansion and needs, product and service design and messaging, and opportunities for future growth.

### Developing an audience for an HIV drug approaching patent expiration

AbbVie needed to understand how to keep an aging HIV drug relevant in an era of one-pill-per-day drug regimens. In an international study, we engaged patients, physicians, and health advocates at their homes, offices and in research facilities to understand the patient and prescriber experience with Kaletra and to identify new opportunities for audiences, accessories, and marketing messages.

### Navigating the French healthcare system to support delivery of new drugs

AbbVie needed to understand how a new drug that combined routine infusions with at-home self-injections would fit into emerging drug-delivery trends in the French healthcare market. We interviewed prescribers, transfusion nurses, pharmacists, and health advocates to develop recommendations for drug delivery and adherence to the new drug regimen.

### Understanding the millennial homebuyer experience to inform new service design

Cherry Creek Mortgage was developing a new real estate and mortgage service aimed at millennial and first-time homebuyers. Envisioned as both an online and person-to-person solution, Cherry Creek Mortgage needed to understand homebuyer use of online products and services, their online communication preferences, and their reactions to the new service model.

We conducted a series of in-person and online focus groups with first-time and experienced millennial buyers from strategic markets across the country. Our findings helped to inform everything from product and service design and messaging to the educational and emotional needs of these vital target audiences.

### Identifying internet security and backup needs of home and small business computer users

OpenText wanted to grow its Webroot brand of antivirus and internet security home-computing solutions and needed to understand how users evaluated and selected products. We conducted a series of online focus groups with participants from across the country to inform advertising channels, marketing messages, and proposed product features for future releases.

With the successful completion of the internet security research program, the OpenText marketing team re-engaged us to execute a similar research program for their Carbonite data backup solutions. We used the same process as the first project, expanding it to include small-business owners, and we uncovered data backup needs, messages, and proposed product features for home and small-business users.

### Enabling DaVita to migrate clinical research recruitment and participation online

DaVita Clinical Research (DCR) administers clinical trials for pharmaceutical companies to determine the efficacy of various treatments on healthy and kidney-compromised populations. DCR has access to the latter population, and we've worked with them in the past to identify how to attract, recruit, and retain healthy participant populations for their clinical trials.

When DCR wanted to expand its participant-recruitment net wider and make fully remote clinical trials available nationwide, we conducted a series of stakeholder and participant interviews to identify how an online clinical trial portal could attract new and remote participants, keep them engaged, and connect with them when research opportunities that fit their preferences came up.