







# QUALITATIVE DATA SHARING ESSENTIALS






Wondering what to share at the end of your qualitative data project? Effective sharing goes beyond archiving; it must preserve the contextual value of the data for future use. Here's a checklist of critical data files and supporting documents, along with file organization tips and repository options.

## What files should you consider sharing?\*

 <p><b>Study Description</b> A complete overview of the study, including research goals and methods for data collection, processing, and analysis.</p>	 <p><b>Data files</b> De-identified human subjects' data (e.g., transcripts, field notes) or other available data sources (e.g., news articles, government reports).</p>
 <p><b>Study Records**</b> Blank copies of the IRB-approved consent form, recruitment materials, and the IRB protocol.</p>	 <p><b>Codebooks</b> The coding scheme, including themes, codes, and their definitions, along with supporting excerpts and any identifiers used to link data sources.</p>
 <p><b>Data collection instruments</b> Blank copies of any instruments used to gather data (e.g., interview guides, questionnaires, forms, checklists)</p>	 <p><b>README file</b> The project description and metadata, explaining the list of files and their relationships, and referencing any associated publications.</p>

\*Requirements can vary across data repositories. Consult the specific submission guidelines and archiving policies of each repository. \*\*Human Subject Research only.

## How to best organize your files?

-  Give preference to a nested organization structure
-  Organize files, folders, and subfolders based on the study complexity (e.g., sites, samples, time points)
-  Include the README file at the root level
-  Separate study-level files from data files in different folders
-  Give folders and files descriptive names

## Where to archive your qualitative data?

Before choosing a data repository for your research, you should weigh several factors. While many repositories accept qualitative data, some offer specialized tools and services to preserve its value and usefulness over time. Below are a few options based in the U.S.:




Check out this toolkit developed to support qualitative data sharing in an ethical manner:

**QDS**  
Qualitative Data Sharing  
**TOOLKIT**  
[qdstoolkit.org](http://qdstoolkit.org)









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