



NAXION
thinking

AI in Qualitative Research

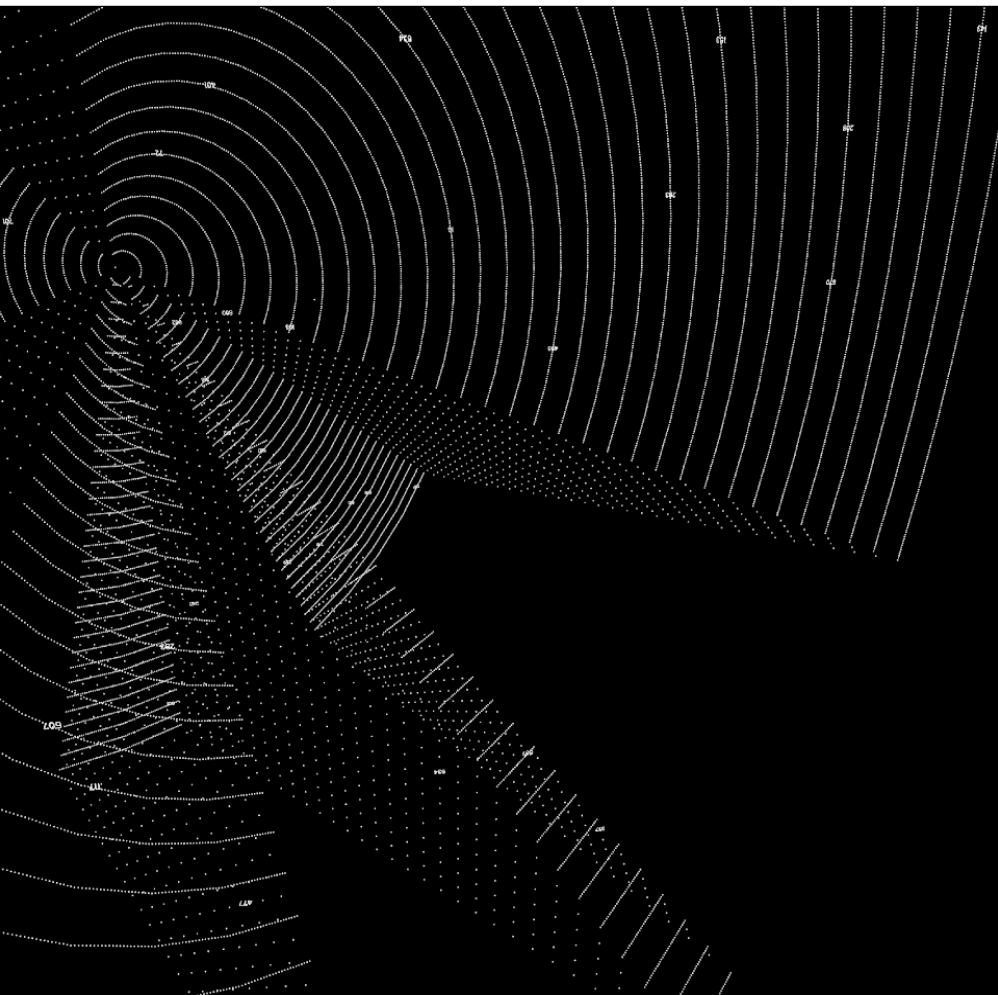
It Can Interpret Answers. Can It Ask the Right Questions?

CoLoop Community | Early Adopter Series

April 1, 2025



Session Roadmap

- 
- Background + Brief Retrospective
 - Where AI Perform Well Today
 - The Next Frontier: AI as Interviewer
 - Conclusions & Predictions

Some Questions *You Just Gotta Ask*

Qualitative

In-depth, rich, nuanced, exploratory, the 'why' behind the numbers

Small sample sizes

Examples

- Focus groups
- IDIs, dyads, triads
- Ux / Ui
- Communities
- Diary studies
- Ethnography
- BBFGs
- Observational

Quantitative

Statistically reliable, representative, repeatable, trend-able

Large representative samples

Examples

- NPS
- Key drivers
- Ad effectiveness
- Choice modeling
- Customer satisfaction
- Segmentation
- Brand tracking
- Pricing analysis

Tech-Driven Innovations in Qualitative Research

Tech Advancements

2000

The internet becomes mainstream, broadband expands, and early Web 2.0 tools emerge

2005

Smartphones go mainstream, social media (UGC) explode in popularity

2010

Video conferencing tools become reliable, and AI-powered analytics begin emerging

2015

AI-powered tools like NLP, chatbots, and deep learning become more refined; Zoom grows in popularity

2020

Generative AI, LLMs, & advanced automation introduce new research methods. Covid accelerates virtual trends

Impact on Qual Research

- Faster data collection & real-time insights
- Increased diversity and global reach of respondents
- Lower costs compared to traditional methods
- Richer behavioral + emotional insights through multimedia

Online forums
Human factors
Early discussion boards
Usability testing
UX testing

Social media 'listening'
Digital ethnography
Mobile diary studies
Online communities

Mobile ethnography
Video interviews
Eye-tracking software (UX)
Sentiment analysis
Mobile UX testing

Automated text analysis
Behavioral analytics
Remote UX research
Automated transcriptions

Virtual groups & IDIs
AI-assisted qual coding
AI-powered qual analysis
AR/VR immersive research
AI-driven video analysis

Innovations in Qual Research

Where Are We Now?

2025

Advances in **autonomous AI agents**, workplace automation, **enhanced search and reasoning tools**, and breakthroughs in healthcare diagnostics

Synthetic respondents, widespread adoption of LLM-driven platforms assistants to **analyze transcripts, generate insights**, and now ... **conduct qualitative interviews**



Where are We *Already Sold?*

LLMs are **Indispensable** for Certain Qualitative Tasks

Transcription & Translation

- Transcribes and translates in real time
- Handles multiple languages and dialects

Thematic Analysis

- Generates draft of key insights / findings
- Can visualize data with word clouds, trend reports

Text Summarization

- Quickly identifies key themes, patterns, and sentiments
- Enables faster decision-making, strategic development

Data Mining

- Streamlines coding / categorizing mentions
- Quickly mines large data sets for illustrative quotes

Uncovering
unexpected
insights

LLMs are Pretty Good **Conversationalists** Too

Versatile

Can engage in a wide range of topics, from casual chats to deep technical discussions

Always On

Can converse without fatigue or time limitations, serving as an always-available assistant or chatbot

Scalable



Can engage in countless conversations simultaneously and provide immediate, thoughtful responses

Contextually Aware

Can maintain short-term context and details within a conversation, tracking the flow of dialogue



It Can Chat and Query. Can it *Moderate?*

When 'Top-of-Mind' or 'Lower Stakes' Data will Suffice



Current Use Cases

- Ui/Ux testing
- Customer support issues
- Ad/message testing
- Probing OE responses
- NPS score follow-ups
- 'Smart' BBFGs or diaries
- Hiring interviews
- B2C studies
- *Non-executive* B2B studies



A Look at Current Limitations

Limited understanding

- Generates probes based on predictive patterns
- Lacks human perceptions and interpretations
- Lacks true empathy to build real rapport

Insensitive to inputs

- Differences in prompts generate varied responses
- Output can seem biased or culturally inappropriate
- Struggles with nuances like sarcasm or irony

Limited real-time adaptability

- Does not learn within individual, real-time conversations
- Learning is static and happens between updates
- Can repeat mistakes without adapting dynamically

Difficulty with long-term context

- Struggles to hold context over multi-turn conversations
- Has difficulty tracking extensive, nuanced information
- Can lose track, resulting in errors or irrelevant responses

What's the **Practical Impact?**

Set-Up to Control the Flow

- They require you to set up a rigid script > so won't know when someone skips ahead
- Problem of fatigue from all the OE questions > so it's unable to clarify complex issues or answers
- You could offer a higher incentive to reduce attrition > but that's risky (outcome + budget)

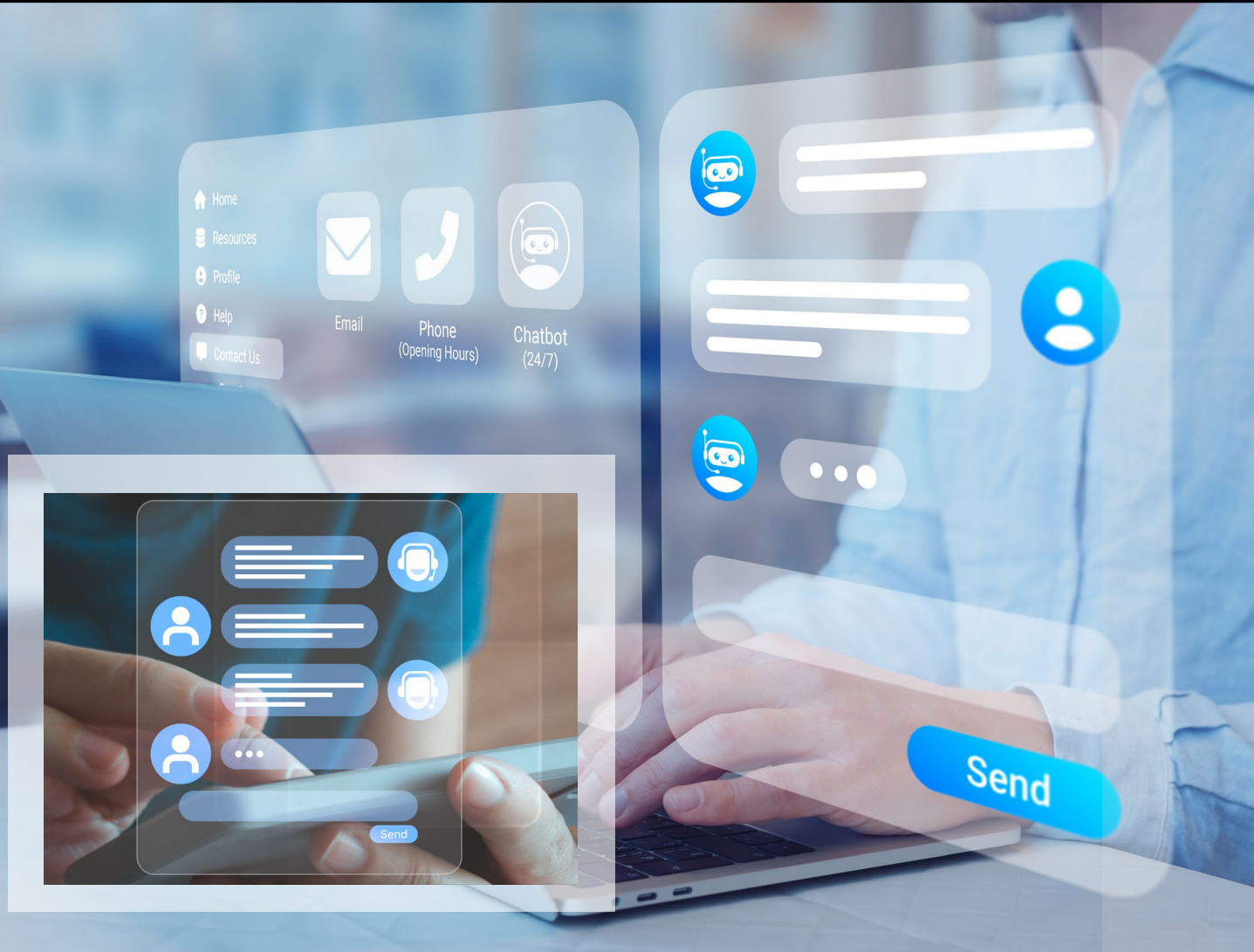
Not Fit for Certain Studies

- Deep, exploratory ('white space') research
- Highly personal subjects (grief, mental health)
- Psychologically complex topics (to shift behaviors)
- Require adaptive reasoning + questioning
- Low incidence or hard to engage targets

Scalable



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Ask Not *'Can it Moderate?'*

...



...

**Ask *'What's the Best
Methodological Match'?***



'Pick Your Poison'

In-Depth Qual

- Lower incidence
- Smaller sample size
- Comfortable timeframe
- In-depth, exploratory data
- Wide-ranging issues
- Higher-level strategic
- Nuanced, complex
- Requires human guidance

Qual-at-Scale

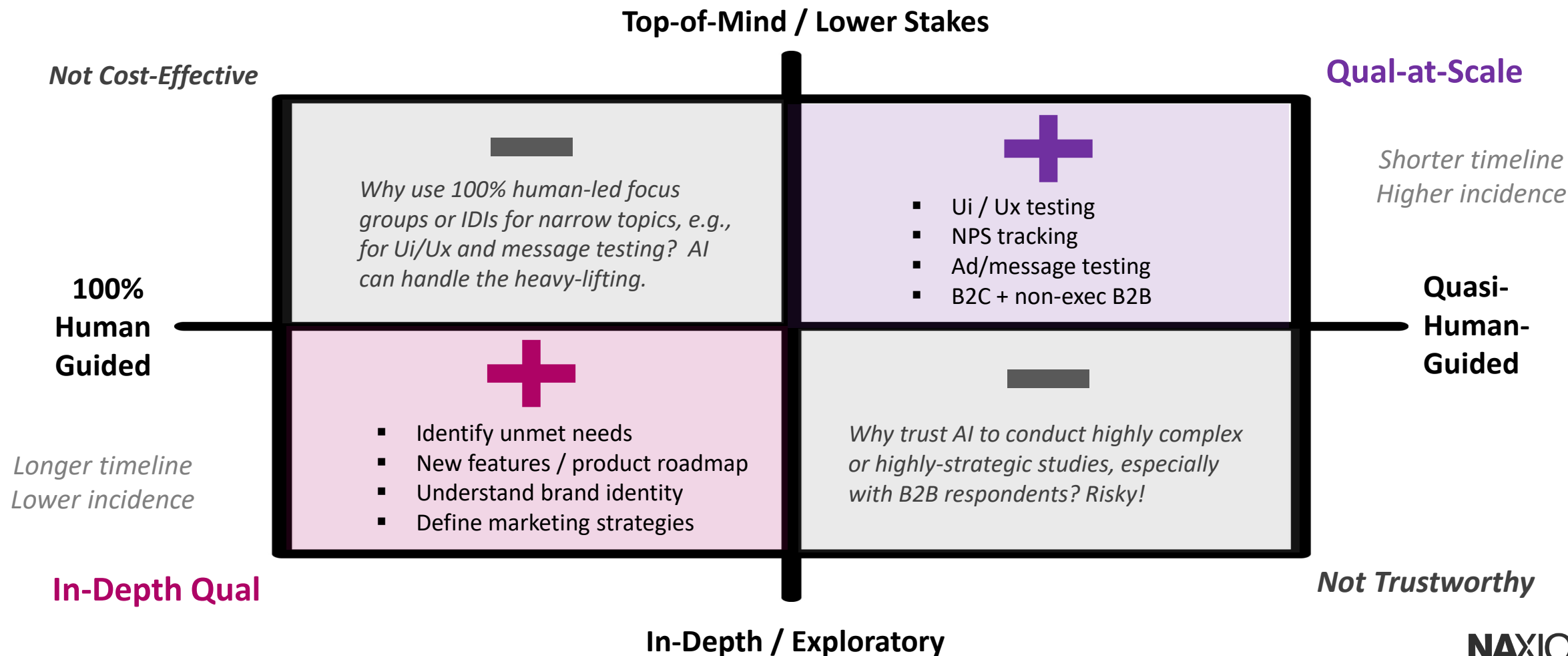
- Higher incidence
- Larger sample size
- Tight timeframe
- Top-of-mind data
- Specific issue
- Gut-check
- Troubleshooting
- AI probes are sufficient

Quantitative

- Higher incidence
- Larger sample size
- Comfortable timeframe
- Statistically reliable data
- Complex issues
- Higher-level strategic
- Critical business decisions
- Strict script + answer choices



A New Tool in the Toolbox





6 Things to Look Out For

2026

1

In-depth qual will be alive and well, and highly-valued for what it does best

2

Best practices will develop for collecting and quantifying qual-at-scale data

3

Qual data will be useful for LLMs to stay up-to-date and address bias

4

Capabilities will expand as ‘reasoning’ or “agentic” AI is developed

5

Capabilities will improve as small LLMs are trained to probe specific issues

6

‘Qual-at-scale’ *should* be renamed ‘**sentiment-at-scale**’



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Questions?

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