

Using the Blaise Alien Router For Audio-Recording of In-Person Interviews

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The Blaise alien router is a useful technique for managing calls to external software. In this paper, we describe use of an alien router for activation of audio-recording software for in-person surveys.

The performance of field staff and the effectiveness of item wording are notoriously hard to monitor during production field interviews. Traditional methods of live observation can bias results through the presence of the observer, and verification call-backs may not provide enough detail. For computer-assisted face-to-face surveys, digital audio recording offers an efficient alternative which allows evaluation of interviewer and item performance during data collection.

We describe a practical technique in which Blaise instruments can be enabled for computer audio-recorded interviewing (CARI). This approach comprises an external file for specifying items to be recorded, an alien router which activates the laptop's sound-recording system, and block-level activation of the router within a Blaise instrument. Ideally, a system for audio recording should require little programming, execute undetectably, provide a flexible choice of which items to record, allow respondent consent to be given or revoked at any time and store recordings in clearly identified files. This system offers all of those advantages. By invoking the router on specific blocks or on the entire instrument, a minor programming effort can turn a standard implementation into a CARI-enabled questionnaire.

Abstract