Automation: Assessing the Impact on Qualitative Research

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Intro

- The context and impact of Automation

- Faster, Cheaper – but what about Quality?

- Automation and Qual
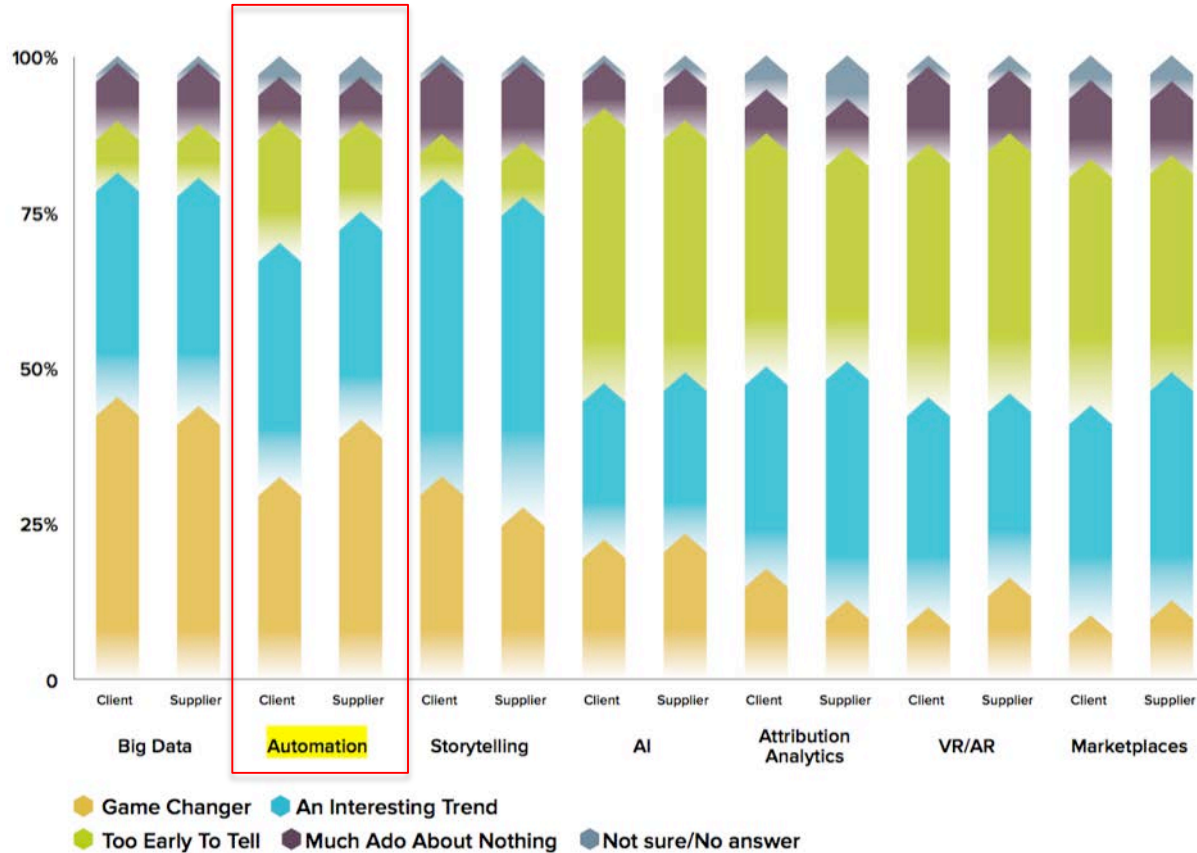
- The rise of Text in Qual

- The Future

Automation Hype or Game Changer?

GRIT
Q4 2016

One-third
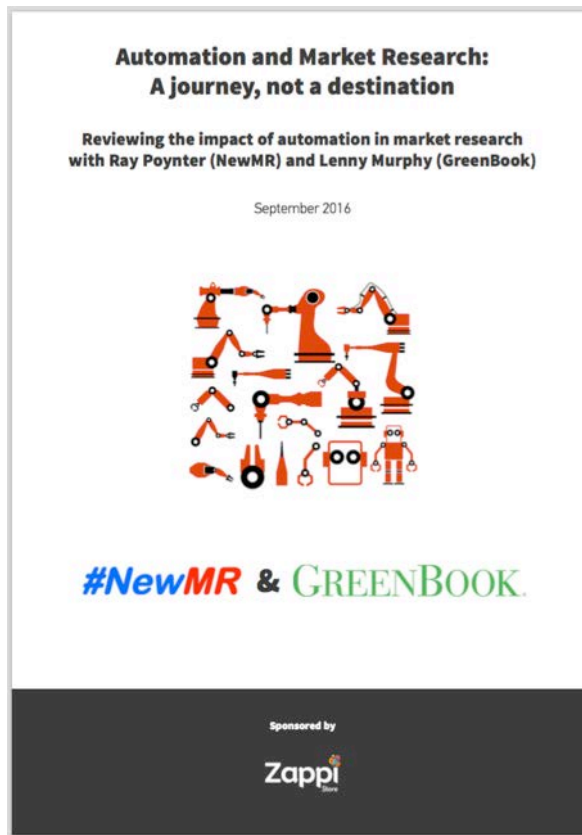Game Changer

One—third
Interesting
Trend

Automation Hype or Game Changer

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Lenny Murphy

**Automation and Market Research:
A journey, not a destination**

Reviewing the impact of automation in market research
with Ray Poynter (NewMR) and Lenny Murphy (GreenBook)

September 2016

#NewMR & GreenBook.

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Key Points

- Automation makes things faster, cheaper and sometimes better.
- Clients not researchers determine the quality that is bought.
- Clients often value speed over all else.
- Automation will result in more research being conducted.

The Impact of Automation?

Glass blowing was an artisanal skill

1905, NY, Michael Owens automates it

- Massive increase in production

- Massive reduction in costs

- Making glass bottles became de-skilled

- Glass is used for many new things, e.g. food and medication

- Employment and health increase

The Four Stages of Automation

Labour

Spinning Jenny / Steam Hammer

Skill

Pottery / Counting money

Mind

Sat Nav / Google Translate

Creativity

Interpreting data / Writing reports

Automation – Better or Worse?

Better

- Supermarket food
- Producing canvas & oil
- Matching data
- Making contact lenses
- Everyday suit
- Chocolate bars

Worse

- Restaurant food
- Painting a picture
- Interpreting data
- Conducting an eye test
- Wedding dress
- Cakes

Supermarket self-checkout?   Organising Flights?

Automation and Standardisation

Whitworth Standard 1841

Automation and Qual

- ## The logistics of Qual
  – Calendars, booking participants, recording, paying, sat nav, production of materials

- ## Aspects of online Qual
  – **Discussions, Focus Groups, etc**: Notifications, pre-loaded questions and probes, transcripts, word clouds (and better)

- ## Aspects of digital Qual
  – **Social Media**: gathering and monitoring posts, organising and tagging, visualising and structuring

  – **Participant Collaboration:** Uploading images, downloading tasks, SMS, push notifications, time stamping, FAQs

Impact? Generally: Faster, Easier, Cheaper, Better

More Artefacts

More text

More audio

More images

More video

Speech Recording vs Recognition

Recording	Recognition
Long history in qual	Think Siri and Alexa
With mobile and wireless, increasingly easy to capture	People becoming accustomed to speaking to devices
Analysed post event	Analysis happens real-time. Responses can be in-the-moment
Time consuming to analyse	Less time consuming to analyse

Analytics and Text Data

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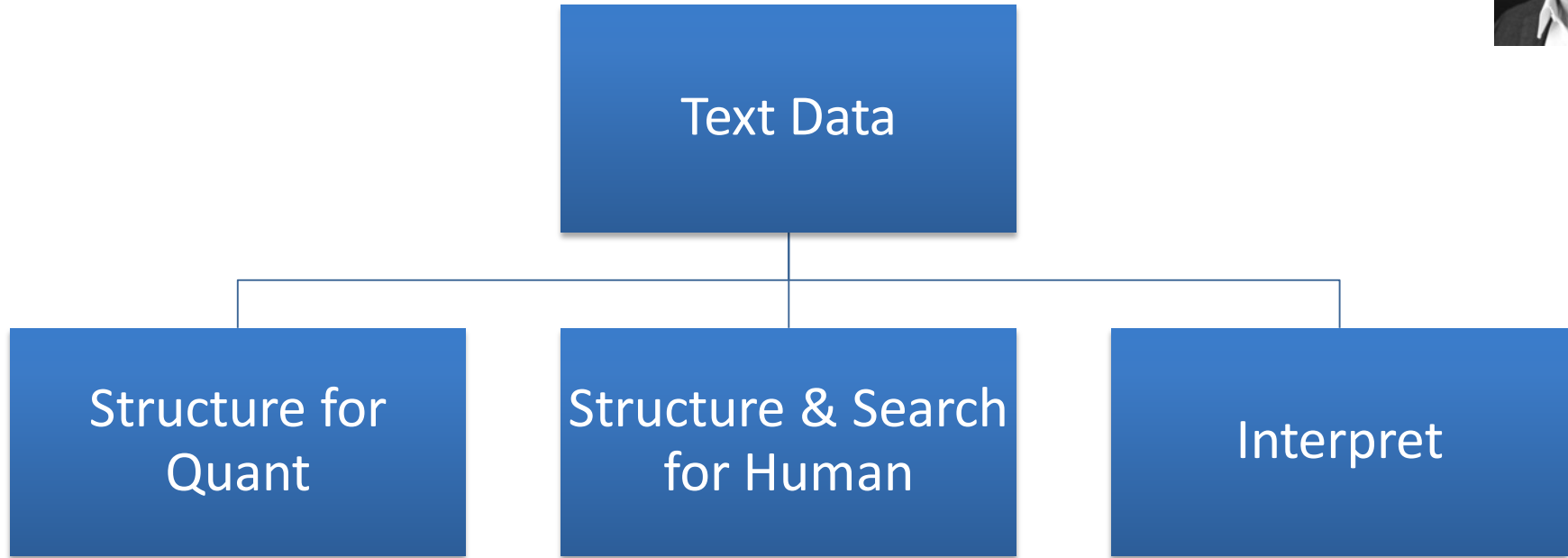
Automation and Analysis

Predicated on having artefacts to analyse
  – E.g. transcripts, photos, videos etc

1. Organising, storing, filtering artefacts

2. Overviews and analytics

3. Interpretation

4. Story telling

The Near Future

- VR and AR – face-to-face and remote

- Chatbots – pretty basic, but cheap and fast

- Continuous improvements in text analytics

- Speech to text automation, especially for video

- Image and video search and tagging

- More observational, passive, and biometric data

- More quantification of research that used to be qual

The Not So Near Future

- Polygraphs for everybody?
  - Facial coding, biometrics, voice analysis

- Neuroscience?
  - Insight into underlying emotions and reactions

- Robot / Chatbot interviewers?

- AI turning qual into quant?

Limitations
1. Would it work?
2. Will people agree to it?
3. Will it be portable, cheap, fast enough?

The Metaphor of the Camera

Automation and technology means anybody can take a photograph

- Focus can be automatic

- Adjusting for light can be automatic

- Red-eye adjustment can be automatic

But, a skilled photographer usually produces the best photos!

In Summary

- Online and Digital Qual are (largely) the result of automation

- F2F Qual: automation mostly about logistics

- Automation of analytics is predicated on having artefacts – and there is growth in artefacts

- Many things that do not work today, will work tomorrow, or soon – don't write them off

- "If you can automate it, automate it"
  - So, focus your skills on things that can't be automated

Thank You!

You can find out more about Ray's NewMR activities at http://newmr.org/
You can subscribe to Ray's weekly mailing via http://eepurl.com/hAnKA

Questions?

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