## **Contents**

Acknowledgements		ĺλ
1	Introduction Defining Terms Researching the Internet Towards Internet Methodologies Technology Introduction	1 2 3 6 7
2	Practicalities of Using CMC Advantages of CMC Challenges of Using CMC Internet Access and Usage	17 17 26 31
3	An Ethical Framework Principles of Fair Information Processing Online Practical Ethical Guidelines Informed Consent Confidentiality Netiquette Conclusion	39 40 47 48 57 59 62
4	Introducing Online Methods Standardized Interviews Non-standardized Interviews Observational Techniques Observation of Linguistic Behaviour Participant Observation Collecting Personal Documents Mixed Methods Conclusion	65 66 75 84 85 87 91 95
5	Online Focus Groups The Focus Group Method Online Focus Groups Set-up and Access Requirements The Online Venue and Environment Selecting Online Participants Online Discussion Rigour and Validity in Online Focus Groups Conclusion	99 99 101 103 105 111 121 123 124

## viii CONTENTS

6	The Online Interviewer	126
	Is CMC a Suitable Medium for Interviewing?	126
	Purpose and Focus of the Interview	130
	Aspects of Technical Expertise	132
	Interpersonal Expertise Online	136
	Relational Expertise in Group Discussions	144
	Asking Questions	147
	Asking Questions in Groups	152
	Finishing Interviews	157
	Conclusion	159
7	Power Issues in Internet Research	160
	Visual Social Cues and Power Relations	162
	Gender and Social Cues Online	165
	Language as Social Cue	166
	Gendered Language Online	166
	Reconsidering the Online Environment	167
	Semi-Private Interaction Using CMC	169
	Public Interaction Using CMC	176
	Conclusion	180
8	Language Mode and Analysis	181
	CMC as a 'Hybrid' Mode of Communication	181
	Is CMC an Effective Research Mode?	189
	Further Implications for Data Analysis	193
	Conclusion	194
9	Virtuality and Data	195
	Entering the Field Using CMC	195
	Researching Unfamiliar Cultures	198
	Researching Familiar Cultures	201
	Researching Online Cultures	203
	Online Field and Data	207
	Identity and Disembodiment	208
	Implications of Disembodiment for Research Practice	211
	Conclusion	214
10	Future Directions	216
Glossary		219
Ap	222	
Ap	225	
Ap	228	
Re	230	
Inc	dex	249