Introducing NVivo:
a workshop handbook

July, 2002
This handbook gives a brief overview of the NVivo software. It’s designed to accompany hands-on workshops in NVivo, or self-teaching with the step by step tutorials and the Online Help.

Use it for a quick picture of the way the software supports qualitative research and the processes to be learned if you are to use the software. Refer to Using NVivo in Qualitative Research or Getting Started In NVivo for more detailed instructions and assistance.

**Getting Started**

When you open NVivo, the Launch Pad appears on your screen. Use the Launch Pad to open a project, create a project, open a tutorial or exit NVivo.

You create projects to hold data, observations, ideas and links between them in NVivo. Click Create a Project to launch the New Project Wizard and create an NVivo project.

NVivo includes a number of tutorial projects that you can use to teach yourself the software. Click Open a Tutorial and select from the list of tutorials.

When you open a project or a tutorial, the Launch Pad closes and the Project Pad opens. Use the Project Pad buttons or the menu bar to access and manipulate your project data.

- Click the Documents or Nodes tab to create, browse, edit and code project data.
- Click the Attributes or Sets tab on the Documents or Nodes tab to create, edit and explore sets or attributes.
- Click Search or Show Relations to access the Search and Show Tools to explore your project data.
- Click Explore Models to create models illustrating your hypotheses and the relationships between concepts in your project.
- Click Close Project to close the current project.
Each NVivo project has a database for the documents you create or import. Documents can be created, browsed and edited at any stage in the project. Use the Document Explorer to manage and access your documents. Go to the Document Browser to read, edit and code a document.

NVivo projects also have a database for nodes, the places where you store ideas and categories. Use the Node Explorer to create, manage and change your nodes and view your coding.

Information about people, sites, cases and so on can be stored as document or node attributes. Attributes and their values can be imported from and exported to spreadsheet and statistical software, and used in searches.

As your ideas about the data develop, link your documents and nodes to each other, to external files, or to websites. Create memos for documents and nodes. Create extract nodes to store references to particular quotations.

Document text can be coded at nodes to show where the concept the node represents occurs in the text. Go to the Node Browser to view and review coded material. Coding can be changed as your ideas evolve and develop. You can code as you browse your documents or nodes, or use one of NVivo’s autocoding functions.

As your data become more complex, you can group documents and nodes into sets to manage them. Filter, assay, search, add items to and delete items from your sets.

At any stage in your project, it is useful to view relations between your data and the ideas and information you have been storing. The Show Tool gives you a quick answer to questions about which items relate to this one. The Assay Tool tells you what proportion of the documents in a set you specify are coded at a node or have an attribute value.

Use the Modeler to create visual representations of ideas, theories and processes. Use layers and groups to organize the items in the model. The symbols representing project items in NVivo are linked to the item: browse documents and nodes 'live' from the model.

The Search Tool supports simple searches for text, coding and attributes, and also a complete range of Boolean and proximity searches. Ask questions, develop and test theories. You can scope a search to include or exclude items, and save the results as a node or set for coding on or further searching.
Documents are the rich text records of your data in an NVivo project - interviews, field notes, records of events and so on. Use the Project Pad buttons to create, explore and browse your documents.

The Document Explorer shows you a list of all the project documents and document sets, including the All Documents and Recently Used sets. Select a set in the left pane: the right pane will list all the documents in the set. Select a document in the left pane and its structure shows on the right, with information about its coding on the bottom bar.

Select a document and click Browse to open the document. The Document Browser is also a rich text editor, a coder and a coding viewer.

You can edit and code your documents at any time. Click the Properties button to change the name and description of a document. Change the icon color: use different icon colors to organize your documents.

Creating documents

On the Project Pad, select the Documents tab and click Create a Document to open the New Document Wizard.

Use the New Document Wizard to:

- **import** rich text files or plain text files created in a word processor. NVivo can create a name and description from the file for the project document. See the Online Help or Getting Started In NVivo to find out how to prepare your documents to take advantage of NVivo’s autocoding features.

- **make a proxy document** to represent data which you can’t, or don’t wish to, import directly into your project. Proxy documents can be edited, coded, linked and searched like any other project document.

- **create a blank document.** You can write and edit your documents in your project, coding as you go.
Editing as analysis

When a document is created or imported into NVivo, it is converted to a rich text file. The document can be edited, annotated and coded at any time: documents are not static once imported.

Use different fonts, formats, sizes and colors to mark passages for review, to highlight everything on a topic or to identify your commentary (visual coding).

Getting started

A project in NVivo often starts with a journal or project summary document. Create a new blank document and write in it your thoughts about the research design and topic. Use the Edit menu to date entries. Go to page 10 to find how to link your journal to relevant material. Go to page 12 to learn how to create coding categories as you write.

If you don't have data records for your project, start with material on the topic from literature or web pages. Import relevant articles or create proxy documents to represent web pages, books and other data.

Getting help

Go to the Online Help and explore the topics under Documents. Remember, in any window press F1 for Help about it.

For advice on creating and designing documents, go to Using NVivo In Qualitative Research (Chapter 3).
Nodes in an NVivo project are the containers for categories and coding. Nodes can represent concepts, processes, people, abstract ideas, places or any other categories in your project.

Nodes can contain any amount of coding. When you code, you store references to document text at the node. It is not necessary for a node to have coding.

The Node Explorer shows all the project nodes, and gives information including coding status and properties. Drag and drop to reorganize nodes. Change the node system as ideas form and evolve.

Creating nodes

Nodes can be created 'up' from the data as meanings are discovered or 'down' from prior ideas and theories. You create a node simply by placing it in the node system and naming it. A description is optional.

A node can be created:
- directly by the researcher, without coding, to hold ideas for exploration. On the Project Pad, select the Nodes tab and click Create a Node.
- when reviewing and coding data. Coding is very often a process of discovery of new categories. The node is placed and named either by the text it codes (in vivo coding, which makes a free node) or during the coding process (see pages 12-13, Coding).

- automatically. You can create nodes by autocoding in two ways: by coding the sections of one (or many, or all!) of your documents or by searching and saving the results of your search as a node.

Types of nodes

When a node is first created, it is placed in the Free Node, Tree Node or Case Node area. It can be moved or copied to another area at any time.
There are three types of nodes in NVivo.

1. Use **free nodes** for nodes that do not yet belong in a logical or conceptual relationship to other nodes.

2. Nodes may be organized hierarchically in trees, like a library catalog. Use the **tree nodes** to catalog categories and subcategories for easy access.

3. Use **case nodes** to store material about each case, and case type nodes to group cases.

Any node can be placed in any number of sets. Nodes may also appear in the Recently Used area.

***Changing and managing nodes***

Nodes can be reorganized, combined, shifted or deleted as your project changes and grows. Click the **Properties** button to change the name and description of a node as your ideas about this category develop.

Use the **Tools** menu on the Node Explorer to cut, copy, paste, merge and delete nodes as your ideas about the node system develop.

Early in a project, tentative ideas may be stored in the Free Nodes area. Later, the free nodes can be cut and pasted (or dragged) to a logical place in the Tree Node area, as higher level categories are discovered. The developing catalog shows how your ideas (and data) are building up. Its logical structure helps you find an idea easily and code effectively.

When you create a node, how to decide its location? If in doubt, delay! Early specification of relationships between categories can pre-empt discovery from the data and cloud perception. The Free Nodes area provides a safe holding place for early, tentative ideas or apparently unconnected concepts. Tree structuring of an index, like any linked diagramming, leads you to look for relationships represented in the structure.

***Getting started***

Start by creating nodes for obvious categories - the people you will interview, the places and institutions you will deal with. It is not necessary to manage nodes logically early in a project. Use free nodes, until categories become clear. Then organize your free nodes into trees.

If your project studies cases (of people, sites etc), use case type nodes to organize these and case nodes to code everything about a particular case.

Don't delay creating nodes: they hold your growing ideas.

***Getting help***

Go to the Online Help and explore the topics under **Nodes**. Remember, in any window press **F1** for Help about it.

For advice on making a node system that works for your project, go to Using NVivo In Qualitative Research (Chapter 4).
Attributes store information about the people, sites or other items which is relevant to your project. An attribute (like Gender) can have any number of values (male, female, M, F etc). For example, a document may be an interview with a person whose age and gender you know. Nodes may also be given values of an attribute, for example where a person is discussed in many documents. Code all the documents at a case node for the person. Then create the attributes and relevant values (Gender = Male) for the case node. As more material comes in, code it at the case node, and those values of the attributes are automatically applied.

Some of this information is about documents, some about nodes. NVivo can create attributes for either or both, and allows you to import, explore, change and review them in the same way.

Attributes are integrated with all filtering and searching processes. For example, filter a set or search everything coded at a node for material from males aged 20 - 35.

**Creating attributes and values**

An attribute and its values can be created

- **directly** by the researcher, without giving values to any documents or nodes. On the Project Pad, select the Documents tab and the Attributes tab. Click Edit a Document Attribute. Select the Nodes tab and the Attributes tab, and click Edit a Node Attribute to create a node attribute.

- **automatically** by importing a table from a spreadsheet or statistical package. Values of attributes are given to the appropriate documents or nodes when the table is imported.

Values of attributes can be numbers, strings of characters, Boolean (yes/no) or dates. An item can have only one value of an attribute.

There is special significance for numerical and date attributes in NVivo - you can specify ranges of either numbers or dates.

Absence of information may be something you wish to record. If you can’t find out the age of a respondent, you may wish to record that it is unknown - and to use this knowledge to make analyses more rigorous. All attributes in NVivo have three null values: Unassigned, Unknown and Not Applicable. Searches can be set to exclude these values.

**Viewing and changing attributes**

You can add, delete and change attributes and values, and alter the values given to documents and nodes at any time. Click Explore Document Attributes (or Explore Node Attributes) to explore or alter attribute values in the Attribute Explorer. You can export this table to reports, or to any other software that reads tab-delimited text files.
Getting started

Researchers usually start their projects knowing some things that need to be recorded, such as the demographic details of interviewees. You may find other information that needs to be recorded later in the project. Attributes can be added, directly or by table import, at any stage. If you import a table containing existing attributes, the attribute values will be updated to reflect the information in the table.

There is an advantage in storing this information immediately with other data. Setting up attributes early on is very simple, and may help you to collect that data in an orderly fashion as your documents build up.

You do not need to have any documents or nodes in your project to begin creating attributes.

Alternatively, you can import this information from a table created in any table-based software (for example, a spreadsheet or statistical software package). You can also export your attribute data to a spreadsheet or statistical package for further analysis.

Getting help

Go to the Online Help and explore the topics under Attributes. Remember, in any window press F1 for Help about it.

For ways of creating and working with attributes, go to Using NVivo In Qualitative Research (Chapter 5).
The purpose of most qualitative research is to explore the relationships between the data and ideas in a project. NVivo allows you to represent these relationships by creating links between the items in the project, and to external files and web pages.

**Types of links**

**DataBites** link selected document text to annotations, to files external to the project and to web pages.

- **Annotations** are the computerized equivalent to making notes in the margins or post-it notes attached to documents. Create annotations to comment on the discourse used in an interview, or to remind yourself of interactions you observed when conducting the interview.

- Create links to **external files** that can’t be imported into the project, such as tapes and video files. Click on the link, and the file will open (provided that your computer has the software to run the file).

- Create a link to any **web page**. Click on the link to be taken to that page in your web browser.

**DocLinks** link to another document from a document or anywhere in its text, or from a node. For example, you may be writing up your day’s work in your project diary (created in NVivo of course!). You could create DocLinks to any new documents you created that day.

You can also link documents to a new or existing memo.

**NodeLinks** link to a node from a document or anywhere in its text, or from a node. In your project diary, you might note that you have created a node for a critical concept: create a NodeLink from this comment to the node. You can also link to a particular extract of a document, making a new extract node to code just that text.
Making compound documents

Any document in NVivo can be made into a compound document, interweaving many sorts of data. For example, a proxy document might contain DataBite links to external files (such as the original tape which you have only partially transcribed), as well as DocLinks to other project documents (a later interview with one of the speakers) and NodeLinks to particular extracts (the quote where the speaker contradicted his original position in the taped focus group interview).

Links are integrated with other tools. Links that take you to another NVivo document (DocLinks) or node (NodeLinks) will open a Browser, so you can code or view coding, spread context or jump to the original document. If you code a passage that contains a link, the link will be coded with the surrounding text. When you browse the node, it will appear and be live in the Node Browser. There are no limits to the number of links which can be included in a document.

Using links to store ideas

Links offer two ways of storing your ideas. You can make an annotation anywhere in a document’s text. Right click on the DataBite anchor to open, review and edit your annotation, or include your annotations as end-notes in a document report (see Make Text Report in the Online Help to find out how to do this).

For longer reflections, create a memo. Memos are full status documents in NVivo: they can be edited, coded and linked like any other document. Any document can be changed to a memo. NVivo recognizes memos as a set, allowing you to select or exclude memos when you are searching. DocLinks to a memo can be placed anywhere in a document or node, and there is no limit to the number of memos which can be linked to a document or node, or the number of places from which you can link to a particular memo. Memos do not have to be linked to a document or node.

Getting started

Linking from a start document is often the best way to start a project. In your project diary document, use DataBites to external files to hang on to data you may still need (the tape or video that you haven’t finished transcribing) or link to literature reviews, project proposals and sample designs. Place DocLinks and NodeLinks to record your early hunches about what goes with what. Write memos, then edit and code them as you develop understanding.

Getting help

Go to the Online Help and explore the topics under Links. Remember, in any window press F1 for Help about it. For methodological hints on using links, go to Using NVivo In Qualitative Research (Chapter 6).
Most researchers are familiar with coding as a way of bringing together data and ideas. It used to be done by marking up data in margins, or copying and filing under an appropriate topic. NVivo does this by placing references to text at nodes.

Coding can become a major burden if it is slow or routine, or if it is not combined with ways of reviewing and reflecting. NVivo is designed to support many modes of coding and integrate them with other ways of viewing, dissecting, linking and gathering material.

**Edit while you code**

You can create nodes and code as you edit a document. Subsequent editing will not affect your coding in NVivo.

You can also code by marking up documents. As you type up or review your documents, use different fonts, sizes, formats and colors to indicate meaning (visual coding). If you later code the text to a node, it will retain its appearance, so you can immediately see the shades of meaning within the coded text.

**Choose how you code**

You can code from the Document Browser or the Node Browser. Select the data to be coded and make the nodes for coding 'data up', or select them.

- In the **Speed Coding Bar**, type in the node name or select from recently used nodes. Click **Code**.

- **In vivo** coding is done immediately by selecting text and clicking the **In-Vivo** button. This creates a node with the selected text as the title, and codes that text at it.

- Click **Coder** to open the Coder. Drag and drop text onto a node in the Coder’s display, or drag a node onto selected text. Create nodes, find nodes or view coding.

You can add coding in the **Paragraph Coder**, where you choose the node to code at and type the number of the paragraphs to be coded there. Use this when fine selection of just the relevant characters is not important, or when the document being coded is a proxy document - or simply if you want to code on paper and quickly type the coding in later!

You can automatically code any or all of your documents by using the **Section Coder** or the **Search Tool**.

- The **Section Coder** codes documents by their headings, creating a node for each heading level and coding all the text at that level at the node.

- The results of NVivo searches are automatically saved to a node. **Spread** the coding created by the search, and move the node to a suitable location in your node system. (See pages 20-21).

**Revising and refining coding**

View **Coding Stripes** in the Document or Node Browser to see patterns in your coding. If you have
the Coder open, you will be able to see what text is coded at a node simply by clicking on the node. **Code on** to create new categories or refine existing ones. Use Coding Stripes and the Coder to see how other nodes code a node's text.

The coding that you view in the Node Browser is live: it shows the document text exactly as it is at the time. Jump back to a document and edit some coded text. The display in the Node Browser will show the edits.

**Using coding**

Coding is integrated into every analysis process in NVivo. Retrieve all the material coded at a node. Filter documents or nodes in sets by their coding. Search according to the patterns of coding, or relationships between coding, attributes and text. Make rich text reports showing patterns of coding, or statistics on coding of documents or coding at nodes.

**Getting started**

It is often best to start with broad-brush coding. Use visual coding to mark up the data and to alert yourself to patterns and themes in the data. Make free nodes (use the **In-Vivo** button!) for broad categories and code text at them. Return to the nodes and code-on, or move the nodes into trees as your ideas firm.

**Getting help**

Go to the Online Help and explore the topics under **Coding**. Remember, in any window press **F1** for Help about it.

For more information about the purposes and uses of coding, go to *Using NVivo In Qualitative Research* (Chapter 7).
As your ideas develop, use sets to organize documents and nodes. It is all too easy to create a project with hundreds of ambiguously titled documents or nodes, then be unable to find anything!

Sets provide different ways of sorting and managing data. For example, you might use sets to identify nodes that seem not to be used much in this sample or free nodes that are specific to one interview. Documents might be grouped in a set for interviews I handled badly or need return visit. Or sets can be maturing groupings to assist confident questioning.

Sets of documents or nodes are simple to use, and a very direct way of starting to see patterns. Make a set of documents from each team member. Make a set to ask questions about just some documents (do any of the ones I haven’t coded mention this person?). Think of sets as friendly housekeepers. Often one of the problems early in a project is that the first data is overwhelming in its many meanings, and alarming in its tentative status.

**Creating sets**

Any document or node can be placed in any number of sets (in each you place an alias, or shortcut, to the item - not the item itself). That first precious pilot interview may belong with “Experimental interviews”, “Early impressions documents” and “Not yet coded”.

Sets are created and displayed in the Document and Node Explorers. Double click the Sets item in the left pane to see a list of sets. Select a set and the Set menu becomes active, allowing you to browse, search and report on the selected set. The process of creating a set is the same for documents and nodes.

Sets can be crafted more finely using the **Set Editor**. Apply a filter to include or exclude items from the set according to whether they are represented in particular documents, coded at particular nodes or include particular attribute values.

![Set Editor](image)
**Using sets**

NVivo thinks in sets. Use a set whenever you want to point NVivo towards particular parts of your project: to focus on just some data, to specify just where a search will look, to compare different groupings of ideas or documents.

Have you noticed how often sets occur in the menu items on Explorers and right mouse items in models? As you use those menus, consider whether a set would do a better job for you here. For example:

- For any document you can profile coding from *just a set of nodes*, or list the sets that document is in. Make a document coding report and you are asked *what set of documents to show coding from*. Before you ask for all documents, perhaps select all non-memo documents?
  - **Assay** or **filter** any set. **Show** members of a set in the Show Tool and drop them onto a model.
  - Sets are how you scope a search; select an existing set from the dropdown lists or make a new one (of any size or subtlety) in moments in the Set Editor, and click **Search**.

**Getting started**

Sets are a simple and effective way of getting organized early in a project. For example, create document sets called 'Documents I haven't coded yet', 'First round interviews' and 'Interviews conducted by Mary Smith'. Include documents in one or all of these sets.

**Getting help**

Go to the Online Help and explore the topics under **Sets**. Remember, in any window press **F1** for Help about it.

For advice on designing and using sets, go to *Using NVivo In Qualitative Research* (Chapter 8).
At any stage in your project, it is useful to view relations between your data and the ideas and information you have been storing. The Show and Assay Tools are different ways of viewing and reporting relations between documents and nodes and their attributes.

**The Show Tool**

The Show Tool gives you a quick answer to questions about which items relate to this one. Which documents are coded at a certain node? What values have I created for this attribute? The Show Tool lists the documents coded at the node (but it will not show what text or how much text has been coded).

Ask your question by specifying the document, node, set or attribute whose relations you want to show or in the Explorers, select the item and select one of the Show items from the right click menu. Drag an item from one area of the Show Tool to the next.

The Show Tool can also be used to add items to models. Drag an item from the Show Tool to a model to display what you are seeing.
**The Assay Tool**

The Assay Tool answers different sorts of questions and provides more detailed answers. For example, it tells you what proportion of the documents in a set you specify are coded at a node or have an attribute value. It will generate a table that shows the number or percentage of specified documents coded at a specified node.

**Using show and assay**

You are looking at some project interviews where parents are talking about their children. You want to see whether any of the interviews are coded at the node ‘Behavioral Problems’. Open the Show Tool and select Show > Documents coded at Node…. Select the node ‘Behavioral Problems’. What other nodes code these documents? Select one and drag it to Show > Nodes coding Document….

You find that several of the interviews are coded at the ‘Behavioral Problems’ node. Now you want to find out how important the issue was to each interviewee. Go to the Document Explorer and click the Assay button. Select the relevant interviews and click Make Assay Table. This will show you the number of items and the percentage of the text coded at the node.

**Getting started**

Use the Show and Assay Tools to monitor the progress of your project. Show documents coded by this node. Are there any surprises? Which other nodes code this document? Maybe you need to reorganize your categories and merge similar nodes. Use the Assay Tool as a way of quickly finding out where the interesting patterns in your data are. Assay combinations of documents, nodes, sets and attributes, then search the combinations which look promising.

**Getting help**

Go to the Online Help and explore the topics under Show And Assay. In any window press F1 for Help. For advice on showing and assaying, go to Using NVivo In Qualitative Research (Chapter 9).
Models in NVivo display, explore and explain what is going on in your project. Create a model to show the relationships between the various items in your project: use it to demonstrate the theory you are developing, the issues in your team work, or how your data supports (or fails to support!) your early impressions or hypothesis.

Visual models are often the best way to start in a project. This model is from the tutorial called Violence Prevention Stage 2: go to that tutorial for detailed instructions.

**Creating models**

On the Project Pad, click **Explore Models**. The Model Explorer opens with a blank model.

Use the right mouse menu or the toolbar buttons to add documents, nodes, attributes or even other models. Link, group and layer the model items to represent your data and ideas. Create styles and apply them to your model to change the appearance of items and links.

The Show Tool and the Modeler are designed to work together. In the Show Tool, show which nodes code an important document: drag the significant nodes onto the model. In the model, select the node of interest and right mouse to show which other documents it codes.
Using models

Models can be used at any stage of a project for visualization and review of understanding. Documents, nodes and attributes are live in the model: click on an item to inspect its properties or to browse the item. Use the model to explore theory, check or display progress.

Use the live items to show the data behind the theory. For example, at a conference presentation, show the words used by a respondent, or material coded at a node.

Use layers to track the progress of your theories. Create a model and add layers as your understanding grows. View the different layers to view the evolution of your theory.

Track the evolution of your models by saving copies of the model at each stage.

Select Export Diagram to Clipboard to copy your model to the clipboard. You can then paste it into another program, for example, a PowerPoint presentation or a paper on your project.

Getting started

Use the Modeler to draw your project design, detail first impressions or list the things to do. Sketch early hunches, alternative theories and hypotheses; store these as layers or new models and return to compare them and change aspects in them using the Model Explorer. Use the Modeler to plan your research team roles and review team processes.

Getting help

Go to the Online Help and explore the topics under Models. Remember, in any window press F1 for Help about it.

For advice on creating and designing models, go to Using NVivo In Qualitative Research (Chapter 10).
The Search Tool in NVivo can be used to ask questions about your data, find patterns and pursue ideas.

Searches can probe any relationships between the words in text, the text coded at nodes and the attributes of documents or nodes.

The Search Tool will ask your question in the particular body of data, or scope that you specify.

NVivo saves the answer as a node, coding at that node all the data you found. Now you can ask another question, narrowing your search or broadening it to explore other data and test a revised hypothesis. Because it saves the results of a search as a node, the Search Tool is also a way to create nodes and code at them. Thus the Search Tool allows you to build one search on another, as you build your understanding and seek further patterns.

Rename and move the node into a place in the tree if the finds are relevant or delete it if they have answered your question.

Creating searches

Use the Search Tool’s three panels to answer three questions:

1. What do I want to ask? Select a search operation in the Find: panel.
2. Where do I want to ask it? Specify the search scope in the In this Scope: panel.
3. What do I want to do with the results? Specify the spread of context you want to code with the search results.

Choosing a search

There are many different ways of searching your data in NVivo. The Text, Node and Attribute Value searches look up a single text string, node or attribute. These can be quite subtle searches if you choose to set a scope. For example, does the text string “boss” occur in documents with the attribute value “female” which have coding at the node “harassment”?

[Diagram of Search Tool]
Boolean and Proximity searches allow you to search for various combinations of text strings, nodes and attribute values. Boolean searches seek logical relations between coding, attributes and text (and, or, not and matrix combinations of these). Proximity searches check the relative locations of coding, attributes and text (near, preceding, surrounding and matrix combinations of these).

**Choosing the scope**

If you do not want to search all your documents, use the In this Scope: pane to restrict the search to the document or node sets you select. Click New Doc Scope or New Node Scope to create a set to search: use the set filter to include or exclude certain items from the search.

**Using search results**

NVivo automatically codes at a node each search result. In the Find panel, you can choose an existing node or specify that a separate node be created for each search item with finds, or create a set made up of all documents and nodes containing the search item. In the And Spread Finds: pane, specify the amount of context to be coded with each find.

You can then run further searches on the node(s) or set created as a result of the first search. You can also save the search scope as a node or set, and run further searches to test different scenarios (what do the younger staff in the Burns Unit, who trained in the US, say on this topic?).

**Getting started**

Use search from the start of the project. Don’t wait to ask questions until you have read and coded your data.

- Autocode by searching for an occurrence of a text string and saving the results (spread appropriately) to a node. For example, search for the text string 'Burns Unit' and save the search results to a node called /Location/Burns Unit.
- Check that your interviews are covering the issues of interest by autocoding questions and issues, then doing a matrix search of questions by issues. Click on any cell to see what discussion occurred.

- From the earliest stages, the search process offers fluid inquiry. Scoping the search will give you a different way of seeing an item. For example, return text coded at this node if it’s a doctor speaking. Assay the scope to profile these doctors by training, then compare this group to the doctors who are not coded there.

Most qualitative inquiries involve many such exploratory moves and probing questions, building cumulatively on each other.

**Getting help**

Go to the Online Help and explore the topics under Search. Remember, in any window press F1 for Help about it.

For advice on searching, go to Using NVivo In Qualitative Research (Chapter 11).
This handbook offers a summary of ten processes in NVivo. In real projects, they interlock and lead to other processes. That’s what qualitative research is like. As you move on to do your own work, seek ways of combining these tools for your own research purposes.

As you use the software, use the Online Help. When you meet a dialog that you want to understand better, press F1 to get help or select Help > Help from the menu bar. Use the index to find a topic, and the glossary to check your understanding of new terms.

If you have the full software, it came with two books, *Getting Started In NVivo* and *Using NVivo In Qualitative Research*. The sections in this handbook follow the chapters in these two books, so you can go quickly to a fuller account of any process.

If you want training or consultancy services, go to the QSR website for the details of events and consultants near you. E-mail help@qsr.com.au if you can't locate the help you need.

You don’t need to have your own data (you can use the tutorials included with the software), but you do need a sense of why researchers want such software. For general descriptions of qualitative research, and references about qualitative research and qualitative computing, visit the QSR website.


More information, free help, materials and contacts are available from:

www.qsrinternational.com