Introduction: Print version

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Introducing Online Research Methods

What are Online Research Methods?

Online research methods are computer-mediated methodological approaches to data collection which are facilitated in a 'virtual' environment. In simpler terms, online research methods are traditional methods of data collection adapted to use online. Therefore, research methods ranging from questionnaire surveys to participant observation have been adapted for online use through tools such as email, websites and various software packages. However, as Mann and Stewart (2000, 5) suggest 'until now ... researchers have had to proceed with few practical or theoretical guidelines'. A number of specialist textbooks on online research have been published since Mann and Stewart (2000) were writing, for example, Johns, Chen and Hall (Eds.) (2004), Coombes (2001), and Hewson et al. (2003). These books all identify the potential and limitations of various approaches to the use of online research methods. As such online research methods are becoming more established as a legitimate means of data collection for social scientists, removing some of the 'considerable anxiety about just how far existing tried and tested research methods are appropriate for technologically mediated interactions (Hine, 2005, 1).

This website aims to contribute to the growing number of resources relating to online research methods. In particular the site aims are:

- To provide a high-quality online portal to provide training in online research methods;
- 2. To establish a self-supporting online resource to enhance understanding of both the theoretical and practical aspects of online research methods including online questionnaires, and virtual synchronous and asynchronous interviews;
- 3. To draw on a wide range of successful good practice case studies, cover associated ethical issues of online research, and provide important resource links and technical guidance to those with an interest in online research methods.

Why Use Online Research Methods?

Online research methods provide great methodological potential and versatility for research in all fields of social science. Use of these methods mitigates the distance of space, enables research to be easily internationalised without the usual associated travel costs and can be valuable for researchers contacting groups or individuals who may otherwise be difficult to reach, such as the less physically mobile. However, there appears to have been a limited uptake of online methods amongst researchers, partly because of the perceived technical expertise required to use them. This is not to say that online methods are appropriate for all types of research and neither do we suggest that online methods will ever replace traditional onsite approaches to research. As Denscombe (2003, 41) has argued 'A decision on whether it is appropriate to use 'e-research' should be based on an ...evaluation of the respective advantages and disadvantages in relation to the specific topic that is to be investigated'.

The internet provides an arena for carrying out online research which, thus far, has not been widely used by social scientists. This site brings together some of the research that has been done in this area and illustrates the practical use of online methods. The site includes modules which focus on the use of:

- 1. Online questionnaires;
- 2. Online interviews;
- 3. Online research ethics.

Within each of these modules a series of case studies, taken from research projects which have used online methods, are used to illustrate the methods 'in action'.

More information about the structure of the site and the best way to navigate and use the website are included in the 'Site overview' and 'How to use this site' sections of this introduction.

The Future of Online Research Methods

It is likely that in the future there will be an increase in the use of mixed method triangulation with onsite and online methods both used to interrogate and verify the intersections between real and virtual infrastructures enabling research to take place across a variety of online/offline domains. This may well change the boundaries of traditional fieldwork, which is usually located in a particular place (Wakeford, 2000).

The development of wireless technologies, such as mobile phones, have the capability to separate the internet from the computer and are likely to have, as yet, unforeseen methodological consequences, as will interactive television and speech recognition software. Although internet euphoria is past, in our market-orientated society it is likely online research methods will increasingly be used owing to their cost saving potentials. Methodological fads and flux must, however, be treated with caution. Change is not always necessarily progressive: faster and cheaper is not necessarily synonymous with 'better'. As Dodd (1998, 60) argues, we must ensure that '...cheap entry costs and glowing attractiveness of Internet fieldwork do not result in shoddy 'cowboy' research'. There is a need for online researchers to tread with caution and practice their 'craft' with reflexivity. It is unlikely that online research is going to replace onsite research but rather it is another option in the researchers' methodological 'toolkit'. Therefore the use of online research methods must themselves be carefully considered and 'what has become apparent is that the effectiveness of CMC (computer mediated communication) is much dependent on who is being researched, what is being researched and why' (Illingworth, 2001, abstract). The long-term success of online research in the end will ultimately depend on the quality and credibility of the information that it generates.

A note of caution

Although the data collected by online methods can be valuable to the researcher, the potential of on-line research should not be exaggerated. As Hewson et al. (2003, 144) argue 'While ... Internet-mediated primary research has great potential, it is still in its infancy. The technologies and procedures available need researching further.' Further to this, Hine (2004) urges caution in the application of online methods, suggesting that 'internet-based research is no different from other forms of research. Just as we craft interviews appropriate for particular settings, so to we must learn to craft appropriate forms of online interview'. Likewise, online questionnaires should be subject to the same rigorous application of traditional research conventions. In conclusion, the data collected through virtual means can be as rich and valuable as that generated via traditional methods. It must, however, be remembered that many of the issues and problems of conventional research methods still apply because as Kitchin (1998, 395) comments '...the vast majority of social spaces on the Internet bear a remarkable resemblance to real world locales'.

Site overview

Background

This development of this website was funded by the ESRC Research Methods Programme (Phase 2). The aim of the website is to provide an online resource which provides training for researchers who are interested in using online research methods such as online questionnaires and online interviews. The website is targeted at a wide audience including researchers and postgraduates in the HE sector, and researchers working for other organisations such as those involved with public policy and market research.

Who should use this site? Will it help me?

This site is aimed at individuals with an interest in research methodologies, in particular those who are considering the use of an online methodology as part of their research. The site can be used as a self-learning package, a teaching resource or as part of a university training package. It is a valuable resource for the following groups:

- Those who know little about online research methodology;
- Those who are familiar with the process of carrying out research online but want to clarify specific issues;
- Those who teach research methods.

These groups may include:

- Advanced undergraduates, postgraduates and more established researchers intending to use online research methods. These groups may find the resource especially useful for the technical guidelines, the detailed discussion of advantages and disadvantages and the reference lists.
- Those learning research methods as part of their generic training, the
 programme is thorough in its coverage and meets the guidelines set out in the
 ESRC's framework for research methods training. It goes through some of the
 key issues that have been identified as central (e.g. principles of research
 design, data collection and data analyses methods) and also offers those going
 through the programme an opportunity to weigh up the advantages and
 disadvantages of each method.
- Those delivering training as part of various ESRC research methods training programmes. These groups will find it a useful resource in their programme for advanced training in quantitative and qualitative methods.

The resource also helps to meet some of the requirements set out by the Joint Skills Statement which outlines training requirements for postgraduates. For instance, it links clearly to requirement that postgraduates should develop research skills and techniques, a knowledge of recent advances in their own fields and in related areas, and an understanding of relevant research methodologies and techniques along with their appropriate application within their field.

What's included in this website?

Along with the introduction, of which this page is a part, the website consists of three main areas:

- Modules
- 2. Resources
- 3. Project background

The 'Resources' area aims to act as a portal to key information and links in the area of online research methods, while the 'Project background' area offers a range of general information about the project.

The modules section is the main training area of the website. It contains the following:

- 1. Online Questionnaires
- 2. Online Interviews
- Fthics
- 4. Technical Guide

Further details about the contents along with information on how to use the site are available in the 'How to use the site' section.

What's not included in this website?

This website has been designed to focus on certain aspects of online research: questionnaires, interviews and ethics. It was decided at an early stage that the site would not include modules which covered online experiments or online ethnography. For those interested in these areas of online research, we have included, where available, a number of relevant links in the 'Resources' section of the site.

How is this site designed?

The website is designed with different types of users in mind. For that reason we have made it possible for users to either 'dip in and out' of the web pages or to work through the modules systematically.

Within each module you will find that we have built in a series of learning activities. You do not have to complete these to move forward. If you do want to test your knowledge by completing these activities, the answers will be displayed for you once you submit the completed activity.

Throughout the website we have tried to be as user-friendly as possible. You will find that on each page there are instructions on how to best navigate the section. One very useful feature we have included is the 'personal references list' facility which allows users to collect a 'shopping basket' of references. On each page you will see instructions on how to 'file' useful references that you come across and then, when you have completed your visit to the site, you can access your personal reference list for printing or downloading as text or endnote-ready XML.

Instructions on how to use the website and on different options for accessing the module contents can be found in the 'How to use the site' section.

Accessibility and internationalisation

This development of this website has been influenced by issues of accessibility and internationalisation, and a number of steps have been taken to ensure that the site is as accessible as possible to users with disabilities and that it is as suitable as possible for an international audience.

We would welcome any comments concerning the usefulness, accessibility and usability of the site. These can be made via the 'Contact us' page.

Accessibility

Designing the site to be compliant the latest standards of web design is a major step in ensuring accessibility for a range of users, including those accessing content with user-agents such as text-only and screen reading browsers and other assistive technologies. An attempt has been made to ensure that content is kept separate from presentation throughout the site. This allows the user to control how the site should be presented, enabling style information to be overridden so that presentational features such as text size, font, colour and layout can be changed according to preference.

Key accessibility features also include:

- Style Sheet independence, ensuring that pages are accessible without Cascading Style Sheets being enabled or with the user's own Style Sheet applied. All content remains positioned in a logical order if the Style Sheets are removed;
- 2. **Script and third-party plug-in independence**, ensuring that all content remains accessible when these are not available in the user's browser. See 'Use of scripting and third-party plug-ins' section below;
- 3. Controller independence to ensure that all content can be accessed using a range of controller technologies. This includes ensuring that actions in the site can be triggered using a keyboard (or equivalent such a voice activated controller), and the provision of alternatives where parts of the site rely on the use of a mouse or other point and click device (e.g. drag-and-drop interactions);
- 4. **Skip mechanisms** to allow users of screen-reading technology to easily pass over repetitive sections of the site, such as the navigation and instructions at the beginning of each page;
- 5. The use of **access keys** to allow users with access key-enabled browsers to navigate directly to different sections of the site via the keyboard;
- 6. The use of a **logical tab order** within pages (and within forms or flash movies) to ease navigation via keyboard;
- 7. The provision of **text alternatives for graphics** to ensure the site contents can be accessed in non-graphical browsers;
- 8. The use of **relative sizing** allowing users to control the size of text through their browser settings;
- The use of tables only for data and not for the layout of pages to ensure that there are no negative effects on the order and presentation of content in nongraphical browsers;
- 10. The use of **descriptive links** to ensure links make sense out of context and make them accessible to user agents that present all links on a page as a simple list;
- 11. The use of **consistent and clear navigation**, **colours and icons** aims to make the use of the site as straightforward as possible;
- 12. The use of **clear language** for the purpose and intended audience of the site aims to make the contents as accessible as possible.

The 'How to use the site' section includes details of how to take advantage of the accessibility features of the site. Further details about the standards that the site has been designed top comply with can also be found on the 'About this website' page.

Use of scripting and third-party plug-ins

Both scripting and third-party plug-in technologies have been used to enhance the usability of the site, but the aim has been to ensure that this does not reduce accessibility. Client-side scripting (JavaScript) has been used extensively in the site for navigation, functionalities such as the personal references list, and learning activities. Flash and Adobe Acrobat third party plug-ins are also used. In each case, however, alternatives are provided to ensure that the same information or activity is available to users without these technologies.

The 'How to use the site' section provides information on the different uses of these technologies, alongside a description of how to use the alternatives included for accessibility.

The 'About this website' page also offers links to third-party plug-ins for those who would like to download them.

Internationalisation

From the outset we have mindful of the fact that the vast majority of internet-mediated research has been conduced in the Anglo-American context. Therefore the site has an inherent Anglo-American bias. However, throughout the site attempts have been made to make it as accessible to an international audience as possible. This includes:

- 1. Utilising non Anglo-American sources where possible;
- 2. Conducting usability tests from various locations, such as Australia, Tanzania and Hong Kong;
- 3. Requesting two external consultants to specifically bear in mind the international context when evaluating the site;
- 4. Attempting to avoid the use of culturally-specific figurative language or idiom.

Although the use of English clearly shows a language bias as non-English speakers now predominate in accessing the internet, we have attempted to minimise the effects of this through the use of standard formal British English. There is, however, much to be done in this area and future funding opportunities would investigate the possibly of translating the site into Japanese and Chinese, which show the greatest growth in internet languages at present.

How to use this site

Introduction to this section

This section provides practical information on how to use this website. It contains the following information:

- An overview of the site conventions and navigational features used within the site;
- Information on the contents of the modules section of the site (the main training area);
- Guidance on how to use the modules section and possibilities for how different users may wish to access the module contents;
- A description of some of the site functionalities designed to increase usability, including the use of headers which can be opened and closed to reveal the contents, a 'personal references list', and a range of learning activities;
- A description of the technologies used to create these functionalities and of the alternatives for users who are unable to access them;
- Instructions on how to take advantage of the accessibility features of the site, including the use of access keys.

Site conventions

Navigation

There are a number of navigation options which remain consistent throughout the site:

Header links

At the top of each page, there are links to the four main sections of the site and to the home page. There are also links to tools for accessing content (the search page, the site map and the module index pages).



Navigational features in the header of each page

Footer links

At the bottom of each page, there are also the following links:

Link	Description
About this website	Technical information about the site, including standards compliance and accessibility statements. It also contains information about the types of browsers and computers the site has been designed for, alongside the third-party plug-ins used. There are also links to browser and plug-in software for those who wish to download them.
Disclaimer	Legal statement about the information and external links included in the site.
Copyright	Permissions and restrictions on the use of the contents of the site, as well as information about linking to the website and third-party copyright.

Citation policy	Information on how to cite the materials within the site when incorporated into educational assignments or used in training courses.
Contact us	Links to a contact form, and to email and postal addresses.

Breadcrumb links

Every page has a series of 'breadcrumb links' beneath the header, prefixed by the words 'You are here:' as follows:

You are here: HOME » MODULES » ETHICS

These are designed to make it clear exactly where the page is in relation to the site and allow easy navigation from a page to the pages further up the file tree.

Main menu

To the left of each page is the main menu box (this appears beneath the breadcrumb links if viewed without Cascading Style Sheets). This is the main site navigation device. The four main content areas are displayed, and selecting one of these areas will open a series of links to the content options within. In turn, selecting one of the content options will open a series of links to the pages within.

Site styles

The site makes use of icons and styles as follows:

Information

Information on particular site features is shown in this style and preceded by the information icon ([i]).

These instructions can usually be found at the top of each page. They are used to inform users when an internal link will open in a new window or a pop-up.

Learning activity instructions

Instructions on how to carry out learning activities are shown in this style and preceded by a question mark icon ([?]).

These instructions are also found within the style used to mark learning activities.

Examples

Explanatory information about examples is usually given in this way. There will also be an 'example' heading.

Examples themselves are shown like this.

Learning activities

Learning activities are placed within this style.

Links

In-text text are shown in the following style:

Example link

Links to glossary definitions are shown as follows:

Example glossary link

Links to full reference information from references in the text are also shown as follows:

Example full reference link

Where pages are presented in sequence, there are also navigation links at the bottom of the page as follows:

« BACK UP NEXT »

This style is also used to highlight links within the personal reference list. See the 'site functionalities' section below.

External links

External links are preceded by this icon:



These links are always opened in a new window.

'Mail to' links

Mail to link are preceded by this icon:

Depending on your browser settings, selecting these links will automatically open your email software with the 'To' line completed. Wherever mailto links are used, the full email address is also given for users whose systems are not set to use these links.

Open/close headings

Headings that appear to the right of an arrow icon (with 'Open/close link' alt text) will open onto the same page. The information within will end with a 'Close' link to the right of an arrow head pointing upwards (with 'Close link' alt text). The style to mark the limits of an open/close heading can be seen as follows:



CLOSE

When a heading is opened, the arrow will point downwards, and when it is closed again, it will point upwards. Wherever these headings are used, a button to open or close all the headings in the page appears beneath the main menu box to the left of the page.

Module contents

Each module contains reading materials and learning activities designed to allow you to follow the training package as a course, or to locate and work on specific areas independently of the whole.

For each module, the following content is included:

- 1. Aims and learning outcomes
- 2. Frequently asked questions
- 3. Glossary of key terms
- 4. Print version available in a range of common formats
- 5. References: A list of the resources cited in each module
- Further resources: References and external links to relevant books, journals, websites and organisations.

The main content of each module is as follows:

Online questionnaires (Clare Madge with Jane Wellens and Rob Shaw)

- 1. Introduction: Appropriate use of online questionnaires
- 2. Advantages and disadvantages
- 3. Types of online questionnaires
- 4. Sampling issues
- 5. Design issues 1: Appearance
- 6. Design issues 2: Content
- 7. Implementation: Piloting, evaluation and analysis

Online interviews (Henrietta O'Connor with Rob Shaw)

- 1. Introduction: Appropriate use of online interviews
- 2. Advantages and disadvantages
- 3. Types of online interviews
- 4. Sampling issues
- Design issues
- 6. Technical guide

Ethics (Clare Madge)

- 1. Introduction: Appropriate use of online interviews
- 2. Advantages and disadvantages
- 3. Types of online interviews
- 4. Sampling issues
- 5. Design issues
- 6. Technical guide

Technical guide: Online questionnaires (Rob Shaw)

- 1. Introduction to online questionnaire production: Overview and options
- 2. Choosing software for online questionnaire production

- 3. Using software for online questionnaire production
- 4. Diagnostic test of technical knowledge and skills
- 5. Introduction to HTML 1
- 6. Introduction to HTML 2
- 7. Introduction to CSS
- 8. Web forms
- 9. Introduction to JavaScript
- 10. Form validation
- 11. Key design issues
- 12. Gathering information about participants
- 13. Server-side processing

Throughout the modules, we have also included a series of case studies and examples illustrating some of the key issues in the use of online methods in practice, as follows:

Case studies and examples

Online questionnaires

Name (Institution)	Project title	Relevant issues
Martin Bruder (University of Cardiff).	Study on Imagination.	Design of welcome screens for online questionnaires.
Neil Coulson and Rebecca Knibb (University of Derby).	How an Online Support Network Affects the Experience of Living with a Food Allergy.	Recruitment for online questionnaires through soliciting visitors to web sites.
Claire Hewson (University of Bolton).	Empirical Evidence Regarding the Folk Psychological Concept of Belief.	Sampling; Recruitment; Identity verification; Response rates.
Nicola Illingworth (University of Stirling).	Women's experiences of infertility.	Recruitment for online questionnaires through transmitting appeals to mailing lists.
Clare Madge and Henrietta O' Connor (University of Leicester).	The 'Cyberparents' Research Project.	Sampling; Recruitment; Identity verification; Incentives.
Constantine Sedikides (University of Southampton); Alison Lenton (University of Edinburgh)	A range of studies carried out through the 'Social Psychology Web-lab'.	Piloting, Design of evaluation questionnaires in pilot studies.
Michael Solem and Waverly Ray (Association of American Geographers)	Internationalizing Geography in Higher Education.	Recruitment for online questionnaires through emailing list based samples
Tim Vorley (University of Leicester).	A Critical Geography of UK Biotechnology.	Sampling; Recruitment; Identity verification; Incentives.

Online interviews

Name (Institution)	Project title	Relevant issues
Nalita James (University of Leicester).	Teacher Professionalism, Teacher Identity. How do I See Myself?	Sampling; Recruitment; Interview format; Identity verification.
Joëlle Kivits (University of Leicester).	Health information on the internet: Researching information seekers and practices in a mediated health context	Sampling; Recruitment, Interview format; Identity verification.
Clare Madge and Henrietta O' Connor (University of Leicester).	The 'Cyberparents' Research Project.	Synchronous online interviews.
Clare Madge and Henrietta O' Connor (University of Leicester).	The 'Cyberparents' Research Project.	Designing the interview script; Prepared text to start an interview.

Ethics

Name (Institution)	Project title	Relevant issues
James Barker (Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences, University of Wales, Aberystwyth).	Privacy and <i>thirdspace</i> in the research of gay online communities.	Privacy issues.
Penny Cholmondeley (University of Alberta).	Evaluating the 'WISEST (Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science and Technology)' Resource Network.	Good practice in gaining consent.
Claire Mercer (University of Leicester).	Social Exclusion and the internet in Tanzania.	Online inequalities; The 'digital divide'.
Jenny Pickerill (University of Leicester).	Participatory research and internet activism.	Debriefing; feedback.

Technical guide: Online questionnaires

Name (Institution)	Project title	Relevant issues
Martin Bruder (University of Cardiff).	Study on Imagination.	Implementing online questionnaires (Self-produced questionnaires).
Nicky Shaw (Leeds University Business School).	Work-life balance.	Implementing online questionnaires through institutional systems.
Michael Solem and Waverly Ray (Association of American Geographers)	Internationalizing Geography in Higher Education.	Implementing online questionnaires through institutional systems.
Tim Vorley (University of Leicester).	A Critical Geography of UK Biotechnology.	Implementing online questionnaires through institutional systems.

A direct link to these pages can be found on the 'Module index' page.

How to use the modules

The content of each module is arranged in a sequential order and it can be navigated by following the [Back] and [Next] links at the bottom of each page. Alternatively, you can choose from the links in the contents page at the beginning of each module or use the main menu links on the left-hand side to navigate directly to pages of interest.

Three tools are also also included to allow you to access the module contents in different ways. Links to these tools are provided at the top of each page.

- 1. An overview of all the module contents can be seen at any time by navigating to the 'Site map'.
- 2. For those looking for specific information within the modules, the 'Module index' can also be used to allow you to browse contents organised into an alphabetical list. This also contains direct links to all the case studies and learning activities contained within the modules. If you use this route, you are recommended to familiarise yourself with the structure and navigation of the modules (including the 'open/close headings' and the 'personal references list') to avoid possible confusion.
- 3. It is also possible to carry out a search for the information using the 'Search' link.

Frequently-asked questions are also available in each module.

Site functionalities

To enhance the usability of the site, the following technologies have been used:

JavaScript coding, pop-up windows, Macromedia Flash movies, Adobe Acrobat-produced PDF files.

In every case, the aim has been to ensure that this does not reduce accessibility and alternatives are provided to ensure that the same information or activity is available to users without these technologies.

The following table shows how these technologies have been used and provides an indication of how to use the alternatives that are available.

Functionality	Technology required	Alternative
Open/close headings (found throughout the site)	JavaScript enabled browser, version 5 or above (IE and Netscape Navigator/Mozilla browser)	All headings are automatically opened so that all information is accessible. The open/close links remain but have no effect. Tailor-made instructions are provided to users with no JavaScript or users of older browsers.
Personal references list (found when there are references in the text)	JavaScript enabled browser. Pop-up window enabled.	For users with no JavaScript, the full references can be displayed by navigating to the 'references' sections. Tailor-made instructions are provided. Those with disabled pop-up windows will also need to navigate to the 'references' page within each module to find the full reference within alphabetic lists.
Learning activities produced in Flash. (also the Flash-based Intro page and home page)	Flash player plug-in enabled browser running Flash player version 6 or above (this version has accessibility features).	All flash movies include accessibility information. Where the accessibility of the movie in doubt or for activities which are dependent on drag and drop interactions, text-based alternatives are provided.
Print versions of modules produced via Adobe Acrobat	Adobe Acrobat viewer plug-in enabled browser	For users without the Adobe Acrobat plug-in, print versions are also provided in HTML and Rich-Text Format.
Learning activities produced with JavaScript.	JavaScript enabled browser. In many cases, this will also need to be pop-up window enabled.	All JavaScript actions that occur through clicking a mouse can also be triggered via a keyboard or alternative. For users with no JavaScript, text alternatives are provided in 'noscript' tags with tailor-made instructions. Those who do not wish to enable pop-up windows will need to temporarily disable JavaScript to see these alternatives.

The 'About this website' page offers links to browser and plug-in software for those who wish to download them.

How to use the accessibility features

Changing the look of the website

If you would like to change how the website looks to, for example, create a display with greater visibility, there are a number of options. It is possible to change the font size of the site because all text is sized using relative sizing. Because Cascading Style Sheets are the only means of adding design features used by the site, it is possible to override the colour and layout by changing the browsers settings or applying your own Style Sheet. A guide to making changes in different browsers is available from the following link:

http://jarmin.com/ demos/access/ control.html

Skipping repetitive content

If you are using screen-reading technology to access the site, it is easy to skip content using the 'hidden' links which appear on every page. The first of these is a 'Skip to main contents' link which allows you to pass over the navigation to the main content of pages. The second link 'Skip main instructions' allows you pass over the instructions for using the open/close headings and the personal references list which appear whenever a page uses these features.

Navigating using access keys

If you are using a recent version of the most popular browsers, you are likely to be able to take advantage of keyboard access keys allowing you to navigate directly to different sections of the site via the keyboard.

The following access keys are in use on every page of the site:

- **O** = Access key information
- 1 = Home
- 2 = Skip to main contents
- 3 = Search
- 4 = Site map
- **5** = Module index
- **6** = About the website
- 7 = Contact us
- **i** = Introduction
- m = Modules
- $\mathbf{r} = \text{Resources}$
- **p** = Project background

They are used by pressing them together with the 'Alt' key on your keyboard ('CMD' on the Macintosh).

This will immediately load the page in most browsers, but in Internet Explorer the link is only selected and you will need to press [Return] or [Enter] on your keyboard to activate it.

Note: Access key only works in the following browser versions (Internet Explorer 5+, Mozilla Firefox, Netscape 6+, Opera 5+). See the 'About this website' page for browser information and links to downloads if necessary.

List of references

The following is a list of references cited in this introduction:

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