

# Editorial: Using Evidence-Based Decision-Making: Should JSWVE Offer Online Video Interviews with Book Authors?

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An online journal offers a number of advantages to print journals, including faster review and publication time, greater accessibility, lower cost, and ability to incorporate media other than print, such as hyperlinks, animation, and video. An online audience also promotes faster and easier communication between the editors, board members, authors and the readership through e-mail, an online forum, and listservs. The openness and speed of electronic communication can be used to create greater inclusiveness in decision making by gathering information from constituencies and promoting evidence-based decision making. Therefore, when one editor of the *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics* (JSWVE) proposed the use of video-based interviews with book authors instead of written book reviews, the editors sought input from readers about their support for this idea.

This brief report describes the results of an online survey designed to solicit user feedback about having video-based interviews with authors as part of the JSWVE content. It is hoped that this process of data collection from constituencies will be an important source of evidence-based decision making for JSWVE development.

## Method

A brief 4-question survey was developed to assess respondents' interest in watching online video interviews with authors and the barriers they face to watching online video. Respondents were asked:

- How interested would you be in viewing an online video interview with the author of a social workbook? on a 4-point scale with 1 = no interest and 4=very interested.
- I would rather read a traditional book review commonly found in an academic journal than view a digitized interview with an author of a book, on a 5-point scale from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.
- Which of the following are barriers to your accessing online video?
- From which listserv did you receive this questionnaire?

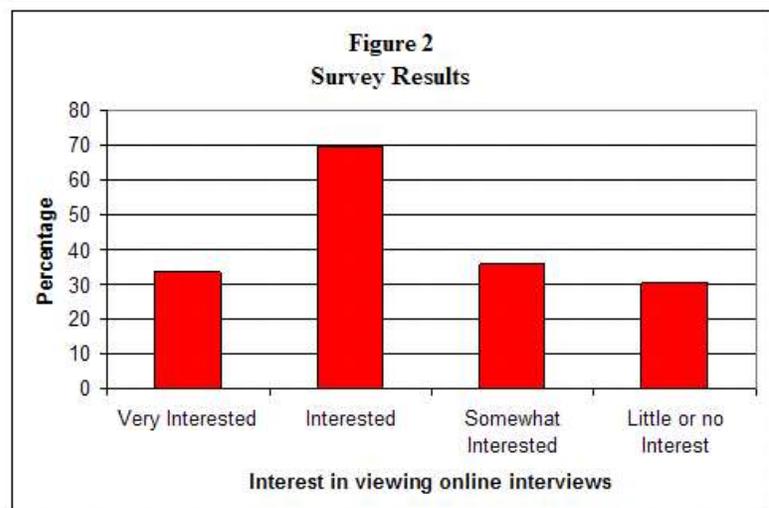
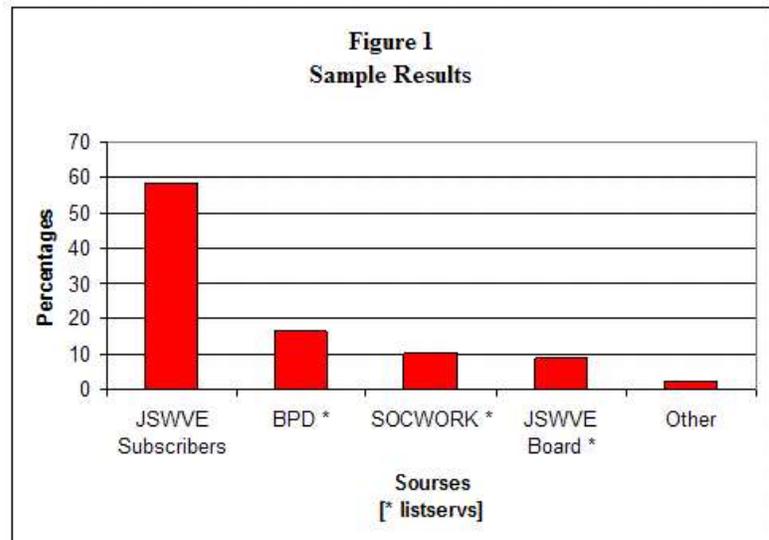
The survey was available online from April 23 to June 13, 2007. An e-mail link to the survey was posted to various listservs and mailing lists. 406 respondents answered the question, how did you hear about this questionnaire? Of these, 238 (58.6%) were from the JSWVE subscriber e-mail list; 66 (16.3%) from the BPD listserv; 41 (10.1%) from the SOCWORK listserv; 36 (8.9%) from the JSWVE Board listserv, and 9 (2.2%) from other sources [see Figure 1].

## Results

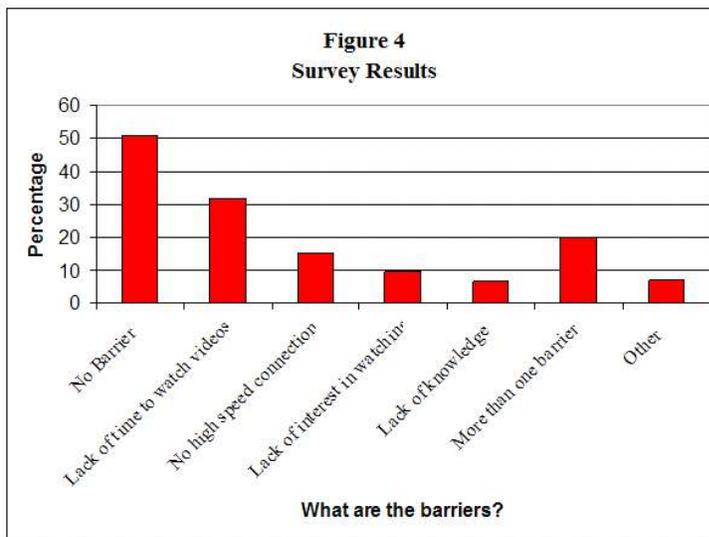
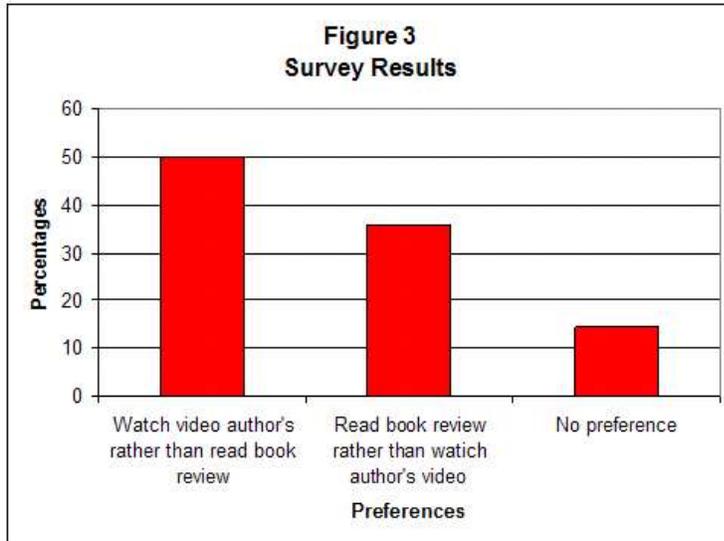
Interest in viewing online interviews with authors was mixed, with approximately 70% favorable. The majority of respondents (69.5%) were interested, with 146 (35.7%) being somewhat interested and 137 (33.6%) responding that they were very interested. About one-third, 30.4%, reported little or no interest [see Figure 2]. (The mean = 2.9, SD .95)

Independent sample t-test was used to test differences in interest between groups of respondents. Members of the JSWVE subscriber e-mail list ( $\bar{X}$  =3.03, SD=.97) were significantly more interested in online video than the JSWVE Board listserv ( $\bar{X}$  =2.61, SD=.87) ( $t(273) = -2.24$ ,  $p < .016$ .) Members of SOCWORK ( $\bar{X}$  =3.2, SD=.79) were also significantly higher in interest than the JSWVE Board ( $t(273) = -2.82$ ,  $p < .006$ ). There were no differences between the JSWVE Board and BPD respondents.

Approximately half of respondents, 203 (50.1%) disagreed that they would read a traditional book review rather than



watch a video interview; 145 (35.7%) agreed that they would rather read an interview than watch it; and 14.3% had no preference [see Figure 3]. (Mean =2.82, SD 1.2). There was no difference between respondent groups on this question.



Respondents were asked to check “which are barriers to accessing online video.” Approximately half, 206 (50.7%) reported no barriers. The most frequently reported barrier was lack of time to watch videos, reported by 130 (32%) respondents. 63 respondents (15.5%) lacked high speed connection. Lack of interest in watching author interviews was reported by 38 (9.4%). Lack of knowledge does not appear to be a factor for most respondents; only 27 (6.7%) reported this barrier. Approximately 20% of respondents listed more than one barrier. Finally, 29 (7.1%) respondents report a different barrier through an open-ended question. These included: lack of video software, lack of control over which software is installed on the

computer, language barrier, need for closed caption, lack of audio, sense that watching a video takes longer than reading a review, convenience and portability of the written word, lack of objectivity by author on video, and “laziness” [see Figure 4].

## Discussion

An online journal offers new choices in content format for subscribers. One of these new choices is the use of online video to supplement written communication. These new choices,

however, require additional resources for the journal, and so decisions about their use should be based on value and interest for readers as well as available resources. An electronic journal also permits greater input from readers through ease of online communication. This brief study polled readers of JSWVE about their interest in having video-based interviews with authors of social workbooks rather than the more traditional book review format.

The results of the study indicate that a significant portion, about 70%, of respondents would be interested in having video-based interviews available, with one-third being very interested. Given available resources, this level of interest warrants a test period in which video-based interviews are made available online as part of JSWVE offerings. Barriers to viewing videos are not problematic for the majority of users. Clearly, a significant minority of respondents were not interested in online video. For the most part, barriers that were mentioned were related to lack of time, inconvenience, or lack of interest, rather than to technology-related factors such as lack of high-speed Internet access or lack of knowledge about how to view online video. The majority of readers have both the interest and the ability to view online video-based interviews.

The use of an online survey of users is both informative and problematic. First, the survey is likely to have significant sample bias. It is likely that those who are more comfortable with technology and have fewer barriers to its use will be more likely to answer the survey. In addition, those interested in the issue will be more likely to take the survey than those who do not have strong opinions about it. The response rate is very small, given the number of potential responders. For example, only 238 of approximately 2,300 (10%) JSWVE e-mail subscribers and only 66 of approximately 1100 (6%) BPD listserv subscribers answered the survey. The survey is likely not representative of the entire readership but may represent those most interested in the journal and/or those with better access to technology.

The JSWVE Board will ultimately make the decision about whether to use online video-based interviews with book authors. It is interesting and instructive to note that in this survey the Board is less interested in having online video than the readership. Thus, the Board's perspective may be more conservative on this issue than many who read the journal. This survey will help the Board to more accurately weigh readers' interest and concerns.

## **Conclusion**

This survey of JSWVE readers indicated interest in having online video-based interviews with authors of social workbooks. The use of an online journal makes it possible to avoid an “either/or” dichotomy. Many readers still prefer to have written reviews of books, since they are perceived as more objective and more convenient to access. Others would like to see an author discuss her/his work in a video-based interview. An online journal allows easy access to both formats. Our survey indicates that there appears to be sufficient interest in having both options online.