

Equity and Accessibility Considerations for Participatory Visual Methods Online

Online photovoice and digital storytelling projects often require multiple workshops and extended time online. How does the online space create opportunities or barriers for equitable and accessible participation? Produced in partnership between the Centre for Community Based Research and Trillium Health Partners - Institute for Better Health, this infographic explores promising practices, advantages, and challenges of the online space for fostering equity and accessibility for photovoice and digital storytelling projects. The infographic was developed based on findings from a CIHR-funded research project that gathered experiences of health researchers adapting in-person participatory visual methods (PVMs) to online and hybrid environments with diverse communities.

Advantages of the online space

People with disabilities or health concerns may find online workshops more accessible.



When transportation is unreliable and commute time is a barrier, hosting multiple workshops online may be more accessible.



Power differences may be diminished when everyone occupies the same amount of space (e.g., a box on Zoom).



Virtual platforms offer greater choice in how to participate (e.g., chat, live captions, cameras on or off, sourcing images or content online).



Challenges of the online space

The “digital divide” creates disparities if not addressed (internet quality, device access, and computer literacy).



Creating art together can take time. Extended screen time can trigger health issues for some.



Power differences may be exacerbated online (i.e., navigating language or cultural differences, and other power dynamics).




Some people do not have a private space to participate (e.g., youth), making conversations about sensitive topics challenging.


“ Comfort, anxiety, [and] transportation [are] a big challenge for a lot of people. I think that it’s important that we tell people’s stories who may not necessarily have been heard otherwise and so I think it’s a great way to reach a variety of people. All different sorts of people that maybe couldn’t have been reached before. ”


- Digital storytelling practitioner


Equitable and Accessible Facilitation Practices for Online PVMs


ACTIONS

 Address the digital divide through tech workshops (e.g., online editing), explaining norms for online participation, and offer device donations


 Offer asynchronous photo and video activities for people to work on projects at their own pace


 Send gifts or art supplies to foster common experiences and connection


 Add a third facilitator to provide tech support in order to meet diverse technology needs


 Ask about accessibility and equity needs upfront and check-in throughout


APPROACHES

 Offer a variety of options for participation and non-participation

 Give permission for people to show up as they are by normalizing background noise and disruptions

 Build trust and safety over time, gather input on what makes people feel supported, don’t assume safety exists

 Focus on fostering a creative and collaborative space rather than a results-driven space

 Be attentive to equity and access needs and be ready to pivot throughout

“ I think [we often just expect] them to figure out [how] to access our digital spaces. [But] it's like, no. They may not have consistent access to a phone. We might need to think about, is there a Wi-Fi hotspot? Is there a way for us to address this digital divide? ”

- Digital storytelling practitioner



Listen to our [podcast](#) for an episode on this same topic. Available now on Spotify, Amazon, and YouTube.

To cite this infographic: Martin, J., Switzer, S., Sadati, S.M.H., Fuentes-Aiello, K., Mansfield, E. (2025). Equity and Accessibility Considerations for Participatory Visual Methods Online [Infographic]. <https://aim4communityhealth.ca/exploring-participatory-visual-methods-online/>.