Sharing the Load
Exploring Collaborative Qualitative Analysis

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We interviewed experienced researchers to learn: why and how they collaborate in their research, and how the collaboration influences the analytic product.

To participate in significant research projects, researchers share the load with other researchers.
This is a generative process that allows teams of researchers to explore different perspectives and make sure that insights are not missed.

Software tool support for this process is limited. We are exploring ways to improve it.
None of our interviewees made use of the collaborative features offered by their software tools, opting instead to use meetings, email, phone conversations, etc in their analysis.

The benefits researchers receive from collaborating (overcoming resource limitations, generating insights, gaining confidence, improving quality, etc) come from the processes of dividing up and unifying the analysis.

They then work to refine and focus their analysis to produce a unified product.
Teams work to ensure a relevant and consistent analytic product by comparing, negotiating, merging, etc.