

Virtual Focus Groups

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Abstract

Focus groups are an established evaluation method.

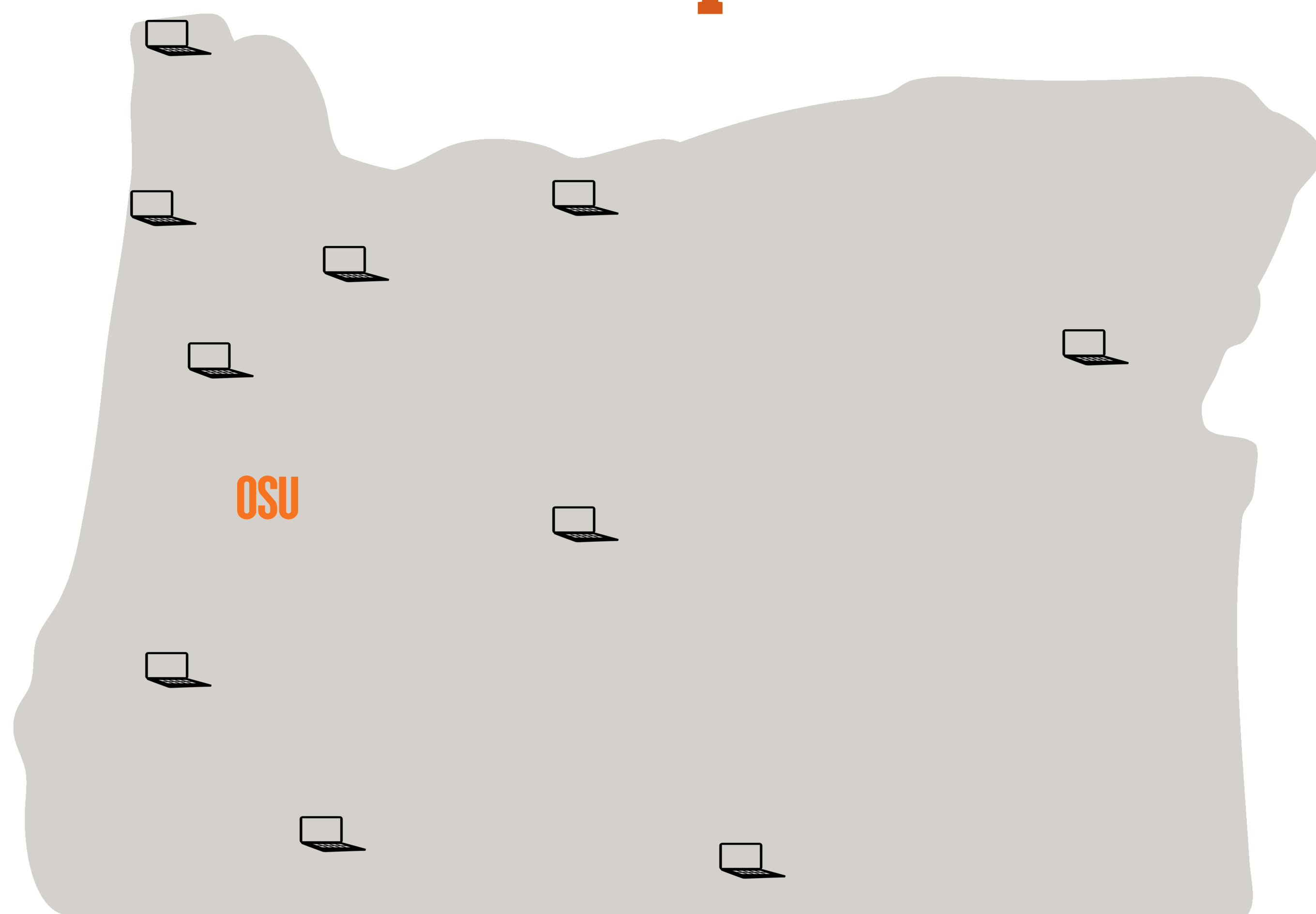
They gather in-depth qualitative information.

Focus groups are viable, economical evaluation tool.


Synchronous, real-time focus groups are gaining traction.

Synchronous, real-time focus groups are a viable option.

Focus Group Locations



 Marks Location of focus group sites

 Marks Location of OSU Campus

Advantages

Saves time.
Saves money.
Reduces travel.

Disadvantages

Technology problems.
Note taker availability.
Detail obfuscated.

Relevance

Extension Service provides research-based, non-traditional offerings to the larger community.

What is offered is affected by shrinking budgets.

Extension professionals must demonstrate program impact.

Focus groups are a viable evaluation alternative.

Technology is available that changes the traditional focus group method.

Virtual focus groups are an option.

Using a focus group format with synchronous, real-time visual experience.

OSU Extension Service employed Polycom hardware and software to conduct virtual focus groups.

Conclusions

Using *Polycom* resulted in synchronous, real time visual focus groups.

Identifying effective alternative evaluation methods increases evaluators' tool box.

Saved time, money, and travel.

As technology improves, more focus groups will use this option.