

# Home Builders’ Perception of Virtual Inspections: A Case Study

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During the COVID-19 Pandemic, jurisdictions began placing social distancing practices on inspectors, limiting their ability to visit the jobsite. The adjustment required many residential builders and inspectors to adapt to virtual inspections using videos, photographs, and recordings. As this new technology gains traction in the residential industry, questions arise regarding its benefits, drawbacks, and industry acceptance. This case study analyzes the perceptions and experiences of five separate homebuilders in Yolo County, California. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five residential general contractors, transcribed, and thematically analyzed to discover reoccurring patterns and ideas. Based on the interviews, homebuilders in Yolo County believe the new technology has potential time and cost savings. There are some concerns with the technology's accuracy since virtual inspections inhibit the inspector's visibility. However, all participants agreed they want to see a hybrid system in the future that allows for some virtual inspections and some in-person inspections.

**Key Words:** Virtual Inspections, Homebuilders, Industry Perception, Construction Industry, Technology

### Methodology

- Qualitative Data
- Five Semi-Structured Personal Interviews
- Inductive thematic analysis using coding software ATLAS.ti

### Results

Based on the interviews above, homebuilders in Yolo County favor the new technology because of its time savings and cost savings. There are some concerns with the technology's accuracy, but all homebuilders agree they want to see a hybrid system in the future that allows for some virtual inspections and some in-person inspections.

### Industry Benefit

There is relatively little literature examining the effects of virtual inspections and how it impacts the residential industry. This topic is beneficial to the Construction Management industry by expanding the current knowledge of virtual inspections and analyzing its benefits and drawbacks.



### Quotations

“I would like to see a hybrid model in the future; the kind where you need to have an inspector on site when it’s really critical for them to be there. But virtual inspections on some of the smaller things, that you can document easily and send to inspector would be beneficial.”

"I think it's going to be more in use, and I think the technology is going to be better. I just think the zoom calls are going to evolve, and that's not going away. We are going to refine this and make it more effective.”

"I am concerned with some of the liability issues that might come up down the road is something was missed because it wasn't thoroughly inspected. As an owner of the company, I want to take every precaution possible to minimize legal repercussions."