desktop research

is an integral part of the understand phase:

— It let's us gain a broad understanding of the field …
— … and to challenge it!
— It helps is to broaden our view on who to ask, where to search, to ask better questions (and get better answers), know what to look for (observation), and what to try (immersion)
— It makes us feel prepared, being efficient with our time and appreciate the time of our interviewee

Yet:
— Preprocessed knowledge may guide your thinking early so get inspired, but do not take it for granted, this means that:
— Our interviewees have the last word

how to do desktop research

Check out different dimensions and views on the challenge, see for:

— Definitions, basic knowledge, key facts, e.g. wikipedia
— Current events, e.g. news
— Innovation, research groups, e.g. publications, start-ups
— Latest thinking and opinions; look into who (thought leaders and influencers) and what is shaping the space, e.g. on twitter, podcast, linkedin
— Trends e.g. trend reports and technology reports
— Demographics and statistics e.g. see how different cultural, gender, ethnic, social, global circumstance change the perspective on the topic at hand

Note: not all of these always apply

Try it out: podcast for desk research

1. Figure out what you think are interesting questions
2. Find a good introductory podcast on the challenge
3. Listen to it
4. While you listen, write down what you learned:
    — Facts
    — Personal assessment (about status quo and future)
    — Recommendations for experts, further research
    — What you did non understand

5. See if there is a delta to the questions you thought of in 1. 6. Unpack (4.) and integrate it into your research plan