Discuss the various methodologies and data gathering tools used to evaluate thesauri and their user interfaces.

There are many methodologies used to evaluate thesauri. Content evaluation looks at the actual content of the thesaurus by checking sample articles and then cross check the thesaurus for key terms.

User evaluation looks at the thesauri from a user point of view. Since users knowledge and comfort level with thesauri can vary, it can be useful for an in depth evaluation. Typically, user evaluations take a look at the entire process of using the thesaurus and discusses how satisfied the user is with the speed, retrieved results and over all process. They typically focus on the interface of the thesaurus.

Formative evaluation is done by internal or outside evaluator during the development of the thesaurus or during an improvement.

Summative evaluation uses a larger group to explores efficacy by checking to see it meets expectations for being easy to use and comprehensive.

Structural evaluation compares the thesauri structure to national and international standards.

Statistical evaluation looks at the connectedness ratio or how cross-referenced terms compare to the total number of terms. It also measures accessibility by finding the average number of references referred to by descriptors.

Comparative evaluation as you'd guess compares two or more thesauri in many terms including scope, subject coverage, structure, and comparability.

Cost-benefit evaluation looks at the thesauri from the perspective of how much it will cost to develop a thesaurus, the benefits of thesaurus-based searches in retrieving relevant items.

Data gathering tools include observation, survey, interview, taping, focus group discussion and others.