iSkills: Data Sources for Research

Michaelmas Term
October 2022

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Sources of data at Oxford

• We’re considering data as a secondary resource
  • Already gathered
  • Available for re-use
  • Quantitative or qualitative
  • Not data you're collecting yourself
  • Some disciplines see this as novel others as routine

• Described as databases, datasets or archives
Understanding the language (1)

Database or dataset

• A collection of information; numerical, textual etc.
• Structured, e.g. Excel spreadsheets, Word etc.
• Indexed
• Derived from a particular research project, source or programme
• Often downloaded or accessed
• Updated over time
• Intended for academic or commercial use?
Databases - some examples

- Factiva: Business news sourced from Newspapers and business reports
- Proquest Historical newspapers
- Amadeus: Pan-European company information derived from annual reports
- Proquest Dissertations and Theses
- ... and Bibliographic Databases generally
Understanding the language (2)

A data archive / repository

• Hosts a large collection of datasets or even databases
• Structured, indexed and documented
• Curated by an organisation; cared for and future-proofed
• Sometimes discipline based
• Sometimes based around a specific institution or organisation
• Content is ordered or downloaded
• Static and unchanging
• Non-commercial / academic use
Data archives - examples

• Govermental or Non-Governmental
  • ORA and ORA-Data: https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ask/getting-started/research-graduates
  • UK Data Service: http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/
  • ICPSR: https://www.icpsr.umich.edu
  • East Midland Oral History Archive: https://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/catalogue.html
  • Research Data Repository Registry: http://www.re3data.org/
UK Data Service

- International macro data from Eurostat, OECD, UN, World Bank, IMF, IEA.
- Survey and UK funded (e.g. ESRC) social science data
- Oral History and Qualitative data
- Advice on finding data deposits on the UK Data Service site [https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/find-data/](https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/find-data/)

Can browse and read documentation before ordering data
Understanding the language (3)

• Open Data portals
  • Recent innovation
  • Usually concentrate on statistical data
  • Make data 'Open' publicly available via web
  • May seem to duplicate what’s in archives and databases

• Question – do they differ?
Open Data portals - examples

Also called statistical data portals

• UNdata: http://data.un.org/
• World Bank data: http://data.worldbank.org/
• UK National Statistics: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/
• U.S. Census: http://www.census.gov/
• National Bureau of Statistics of China
  http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/
Other data portals

• May be project specific...

• Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative: https://ophi.org.uk

• The Oxford Roman Economy Database:
  • http://www.romaneconomy.ox.ac.uk/

• Charles Booth’s London: https://booth.lse.ac.uk/

• Our World in Data: https://ourworldindata.org
Pause – for an exercise

• Take the time to look at these examples of data access using worksheets
  ➢ OECD iLibrary
  ➢ UK Data Service
Browsing for data

• The sheer amount being made available creates problems of discovery

• Interested in seeing what’s available?
  • Browse for them

• Increasingly datasets are cited
  • e.g. Iterate (political terrorism database), British Household Panel Survey, Bloomberg Professional
  • Literature search objective
Searching for data

• Search engines include data alongside books, journal articles etc.
  • SOLO, Databases A-Z
• Encouraged by publishers like Proquest
  • Creating bibliographic databases
• Often available via subscription
  • Asked for payment? Enter via SOLO etc with single sign-on
What tool to use?

- **SOLO**
  - Integrates with searches for traditional resources

- **Databases A-Z**
  - Tighter focus on e-resources

- **Subject Guides (LibGuides)**
  - Curated by your subject librarian
  - Data and statistics for Social Sciences [https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ssdata](https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ssdata)

- **Bodleian Data Library**
  - Additional content on data management, analysis
  [https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections-and-resources/data-and-statistics](https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections-and-resources/data-and-statistics)

Same resources but different ‘shop windows’

Bodleian Libraries: Subjects A-Z

Subjects A-F
- African Studies
- Ancient Near Eastern Studies
- Anthropology
- Archaeology
- Art and Architecture
- Biochemistry
- Bioinformatics
- Biology
- Business
- Caribbean Studies
- Cartography
- Celtic
- Chemistry
- Chinese Studies
- Classics and Ancient History
- Commonwealth Studies
- Computer Science
- Continuing Education Subject Guides
- Criminology
- Development Studies
- Digital Humanities
- Dutch
- Earth Sciences
- ebooks

Subjects G-O
- Genetics
- Geography and the Environment
- German Language and Literature
- Greek
- Hebraica, Judaica, and Semitics
- History
- History of Science and Medicine
- Humanities
- Humanities (Digital)
- Human Sciences
- Internet Studies
- Italian Literature and Language
- Japanese Studies
- Korean Studies
- Latin American Studies
- Law
- Linguistics
- Management
- Maps
- Materials
- Mathematics

Subjects P-Z
- Patents
- Pathology
- Pharmacology
- Philosophy
- Physics
- Physiology
- Plant Sciences
- Plant Taxonomy
- Politics and International Relations
- Portuguese and Brazilian Language and Literature
- Printed Ephemera
- Psychology
- Refugee and Forced Migration Studies
- Russian and Slavonic Language and Literature
- Science
- Slavonic, Central and Eastern European Studies
- Social Policy
- Social Science Data and Statistics
- Social Sciences
- Sociolinguistics

Contact us

Subject Specific Enquiries
If you have a subject enquiry please contact your subject librarian.

General Enquiries
Email: reader.services@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

Telephone: 01865 277162

Post: Main Enquiry Desk, Bodleian Library, Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3BG

Chat to a librarian:

Library staff are online to help. Chat here

Report a problem with LibGuides.
This guide is intended primarily for researchers and students studying Social Sciences at the University of Oxford. It provides information on where to find general and subject-specific data and statistics, how to manage data, and what tools are available for data analysis. The guide introduces resources available only to the Bodleian card holders as well as freely available to everyone.

**Social Science Data in the Bodleian**

- **Bodleian Libraries**
  Provide access to an extensive collection of databases via

- **Databases A-Z**
  A browsable list of databases available at Oxford

- **Nuffield College Library**
  The largest social science library outside of the Bodleian Libraries, and holds sociology collections relating to the interests of College members since 1937.

**Bodleian Data Library**
BDL provides advice and guidance on both finding data and statistics to support your research and managing your own research data.

Contact the **Bodleian Social Science Library** if you wish to ask a question or seek more help.

**News**

**UK Data Service introductory training series: Autumn 2021**
Data Archiving and Sharing

Find out about securely storing and sharing your research data.

More...

News: UKDS: Online seminar: Data sources for research students - Released 8th September by UKDS

Data Analysis
A selection of tools for making best use of the data you have collected for your research.

Data Obligations
What you need to know about using data at Oxford. Your responsibilities and how to comply with data use terms and conditions.

Research Data Management
Find out more about effectively organising data as part of your research.
Any questions at this stage?

• Points of clarification?
• Comments?
Caveats & annoyances

• Search engines collate available resources and present them in a unified way

• But how you access, view and use them can vary
  • Be clear what is being made available
  • Be clear in what format
  • Check for usage restrictions
  • Time delays
Some common examples

• Registration suggested or required
  • Subscription database environment
  • Common with external data archives
  • Providing authentication

• Restrictions
  • Subscription data limiting downloads
  • Confidentiality dealt with by making access harder
  • Archived data discoverable but not accessible
Some other caveats

• Restrictions on how you use it
  • For analysis only - cannot be quoted
  • Use only with suppliers tools (e.g TDM)
  • Cannot be shared
  • Supplied tabulations cannot be altered
• Make sure you are aware of these!
• May need to analyse data within their browser/interface
• Data often available from multiple sources but with differing documentation and support
Restrictions on how you use it
• For analysis only cannot be quoted
• Cannot be shared
• Supplied tabulations cannot be altered

Make sure you are aware of these!
• May need to analyse data within their browser
Microdata and restricted data

• Information collected at the individual i.e. micro-level
• Very sensitive and confidential
• May include direct personal identifiers
  • E.g. economic data, population data
• Only available pending strict application approval
  • From e.g. Eurostat, Statistics Canada, UKDS Secure lab, ICPSR
  • Open data portals will not supply it
• Support making applications via Bodleian Data Librarian
More Examples

• Restrictions on how you use it
  • For analysis only cannot be quoted
  • Cannot be shared
  • Supplied tabulations cannot be altered

Make sure you are aware of these!

• May need to analyse data within their browser
Documenting data

• Good research practice
• Data **AND** contextual documentation
• Make use of citation tools
• An aid in interpreting/preserving your own data
• Key element of Reproducible Research, transparency and Open Science
Thank you

• Follow up this session...
  • See Subject Guides:  
    https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/home/subjects

• Data Research Support
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