Economics 3P10
Research Methods in Economics: Finding Data

Presented by:

Heather Whipple
Data Librarian

James A. Gibson Library
Brock University
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Data Retrieval in Economics

- Who Produces / Publishes Economic Data?
  - Government Departments or Agencies
    - Statistics Canada, Bank of Canada, etc.
    - US Census Bureau, US Dept of Commerce
  - Intergovernmental Organizations
    - United Nations, OECD, IMF
  - Private Sector Organizations
    - Banks, Trade Associations, Commercial Publishers
    - University & NGO Data Repositories
Locating Relevant Data

- First, determine the kind of data that you require (time series or microdata)
  - What?: Time Series
  - Topic?: average income
  - Units?: in Canadian Dollars
  - Variables?: by Gender and by Age
  - Geography?: by Province
  - Time frame?: Annually for 20 years (1990-2010)
Locating Relevant Data

- Need more? Look under the Collections menu for the Data Research Service and consult the Data & Statistics Research Guide.
Canadian Sources

The following are key sources of Canadian statistical data and include Open Access Portals and Subscription Databases:

- **Statistics Canada website**
  Use the Statistics Canada search engine to identify relevant tables, articles, or surveys. You may also browse by Subject or by Key Resources.

- **Conference Board of Canada e-Data Service**

- **CANSIM (Statistics Canada)**
  "CANSIM is Statistics Canada's key socioeconomic database. Updated daily, CANSIM provides fast and easy access to a large range of the latest statistics available in Canada."

- **CANSIM @ CHASS**
  - The Canadian Socio-Economic Information Management System (CANSIM) is Statistics Canada's key socioeconomic database.
  - Also included are some major economic indicators from the United States.

- **ODESI: Ontario Data Documentation, Extraction Service and Infrastructure Initiative**
  - Statistics Canada datasets, datafiles from Gallup Canada and other polling companies, public domain files such as the Canadian National Election Surveys and selected files from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR).

International Open Data Portals

The following are key Open Access sources of International statistical data:

- **Data.gov**
  Data.gov is the United States Government’s open data repository. Browse by topic, or search the collection of over 160,000 datasets.

- **FRED: Federal Reserve Economic Data (St. Louis Fed)**
  Download, graph, and track over 60,000 economic time series from 47 sources. Data categories include Money, Banking, & Finance; National Accounts; Population, Employment, & Labor Markets; Production & Business Activity; Prices, International Data, & U.S. Regional Data. This is an Open Data site.
Maps, Data & GIS: What We Do

The Brock Library's Maps, Data & GIS department provides support in the access and retrieval of numeric data (statistics and data) and geospatial data.

Maps, Data & GIS team members offer assistance with:

- finding data available through the Brock Library
- downloading electronic data files
- converting data files into program-readable formats
- using data in a Geographic Information System (GIS)
- packaging data sets
- research data management

For in-person consultation, please make an appointment with one of the team members (contact list on left side of this page).

We are not able to help with questions regarding statistical techniques or the use of specific software tools, although we can help you find webpages, tutorials, and reference guides on those topics.

Statistics Software

Statistics Software in the Map, Data & GIS Library:

- Minitab
- R
- SAS
- SPSS

These programs are also available in ITS labs across campus.

More Data & Statistics Sources

In addition to the resources available here, please also check the Business research guides for information about specific business and financial data sources. The Maps, Data & GIS Library has several guides and tutorials for finding and using geospatial data and GIS tools.
Finding Datasets in <odesi>:

- Search
  - Use quotes
  - Change field
  - Sort by date

Screenshot:

- Search bar with input: "family food expenditure survey"
- Collections:
  - Statistics Canada (Microdata)
  - Statistics Canada (Aggregate data)
  - Public Opinion Polls
  - Other Data
- Additional Collections:
  - (No Direct Download Available)
  - CORA
  - ICPSR
- Results showing 1 to 10 of about 12:
  - Family Food Expenditure Survey, 2001 [Canada]: Summary Household File
  - Family Food Expenditure Survey, 2001 [Canada]: Detailed Expenditure File
- Sort options: Relevance, Date
Finding Datasets in <odesi>:

- Browse
  - Choose category
  - Click + to see more
  - Sort by date
Downloading Datasets in <odesi>

- Click the download icon

- Click SUBSET
  *Only download the variables you need, not the entire dataset.*

- Click each variable & choose Add to subset
Describing and Citing Economic Data Sets

- In empirical economic papers, your data set is described in the data section and cited in your reference list.
  - Identify & describe the data source
  - State the strengths and weaknesses of the data source
    - See: “Economics Writing Manual ” by Paul Dudenhefer, Writing Tutor, Duke University

- The AEA Publications Sample References now includes guidance on citing datasets
  - [http://www.aeaweb.org/sample_references.pdf](http://www.aeaweb.org/sample_references.pdf)
4. Data sources

We use the 1995, 1998, and 2001 Surveys of Consumer Finances to analyze the actual savings behavior of households with mortgage debt and with the opportunity to save in employer-sponsored tax-deferred retirement accounts. The surveys are conducted by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and cover a substantial cross-section of U.S. households. The surveys collect data on many aspects of households’ financial situation — their financial, real estate, and pension assets; portfolio composition; availability and price of credit; and sources of earnings.\textsuperscript{13}

The surveys over-sample wealthy households, since these households own a disproportionate fraction of financial assets. We use a set of sampling weights from the SCF to compute distributions of survey variables in the population. Unless otherwise noted, all descriptive statistics utilize population weights.
AEA Publications Sample References

We use the Chicago Author-Date style for all common types of publications: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/16/ch15/ch15_sec005.html.

The following examples are intended to provide information for less common sources.

Datasets

When citing datasets, please include the author name or the name of the provider hosting the data, the year the data were collected or posted, the name or title of the dataset, the name of the database if applicable, and any other information necessary for one to retrieve the data. Please include the date accessed in parentheses at the end.


For references to data specifically associated with a published paper, please include the author Name(s). Year. “Paper title: dataset.” Journal Name. location of the data.

Getting Help in the Library

General research help is available at the **Ask Us Desk** in the Learning Commons

- **In Person** – just drop in!
- **By Telephone** at: 905-688-5550 ext. 4583
- **By Ask chat** on the Library web site
Any Questions?
Please Contact Me

- Heather Whipple, Data Librarian
  - Email: hwhipple@brocku.ca
  - Telephone: (905) 688-5550 ext. 4880
  - Office: Map, Data & GIS Library (MC C306)

Library Help
- chat, email, phone, FAQ, videos