FINDING QUANTITATIVE DATASETS

A dataset is a collection of data. Quantitative datasets contain data that can be quantified, or measured. Usually a quantitative dataset refers to the contents of a data table, in which each column represents a variable, and each row an item in the dataset.

Tips for getting started:

☐ Define your goals. Who or what are you trying to study? What time period or range are you interested in? What geographic region or location do you need?

☐ Consider who might collect the data you need. For example, government agencies, trade groups, commercial institutions, academic researchers.

Places to search for data:

○ See if the libguide for your discipline has listed any data sources. You can get to the guides from the Library homepage or at: guides.boisestate.edu.

○ Try a data repository. You can find a variety of repositories listed by subject matter at re3data.org.

○ Use Google Dataset Search - datasetsearch.research.google.com.

DATA VERSUS STATISTICS

In regular conversation, the words “data” and “statistics” are often used interchangeably. In research, a distinction is made between the two. Data are the raw material from which statistics are produced. Or, in reverse, statistics summarize data. - Michigan State University Libraries

Statistics answer the question “how much?” or “how many?” They often come in the form of a statistical table, such as in the example on the left.

Data are collected and analyzed in order to investigate a phenomenon. Raw data is often (but not always) in the form of a dataset that can be analyzed using software such as SPSS. To the right is an example of a data table.

Source: Statistical Abstracts of the U.S.

Source: MILES Dataset 25

For more information and to learn about how the Library’s Research Data Management Team can help, visit: https://www.boisestate.edu/library/research-support/finding-data

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