Sources of Socio-Economic Data

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Web: **www.ucl.ac.uk/library**

We provide access to a number of databases which enable the collection, compilation, manipulation and visualisation of social and economic indicators.

Quite often these databases differentiate between macro- and microdata:

- Macrodata are where the unit of observation is often an aggregate, such as a country. This type of data is used to investigate variables which change mainly over time. Examples include the GDP or inflation rate of a country.

- Microdata, on the other hand, are sets of quantified values regarding individual units of observation, their environment and some or several outcomes of interest. Units of observation can be individuals, households, firms or elements within organisations or other entities. Examples include survey data, like the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, or company details.

How to find sources

- Due to the heterogeneity of sources, a cluster of relevant subscribed databases and a selection of some openly available websites are available via MetaLib. MetaLib is a single access point to a variety of electronic materials and helps to identify useful resources in particular subject areas (see separate guide).

- To access MetaLib, go to http://metalib.ucl.ac.uk

- Select Find Resource and then the third tab Subject. Choose Economics under Subject, Data collections under Sub-category and click on Go.

- From the list, select the data source of interest. Your UCL login details will be required for certain databases or when accessing sources offsite.
- An additional data collection list can be found under the subject of Public Policy and Politics. Sources include those relating to election results, government information and public opinion.

Main sources

Governmental websites:

Data.gov.uk	Brings together UK public datasets in one searchable site. There are datasets available from all central government departments and a number of other public sector bodies and local authorities.
Eurostat	Eurostat is the statistical office of the European Union. Its task is to provide the EU with statistics which enable comparisons to be made between different countries and regions. Eurostat publishes a wide range of data on topics such as economics, industrial and environmental issues. Registration is required for in-depth support from their helpdesk.
Office for National Statistics	The ONS is the Executive Office of the UK Statistics Authority and its work includes the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of a range of economic, social and demographic statistics relating to the UK.

Financial & business sources:

Amadeus	A database of comparable financial information for public and private companies across Europe. You can use it to research individual companies, search for companies with specific profiles and for analysis.
Datastream	An extensive, historical time series database from Thomson Reuters that provides financial and economic data. Only available at the SSEES Library. Coverage includes equities, equity indexes, unit trusts, bonds, interest rates, exchange rates and commodities.
The Economist Intelligence Unit	See entry below under Data archives.
Fame	Company data from the UK and the Republic of Ireland. It includes company accounts, ratios, activities, ownership and management for the largest 1.9 million UK and Irish companies, and summary information for a further 900,000 smaller businesses.
Financial Times	Accessible via Find e-Journal (see screen shot above) or Explore, FT.com provides access to today's Financial Times from 5 regions, an archive and additional functionality through site registration. Data features include interactive charting and market reports via the Data Archive. For off-site and ePaper access you must first register for an FT.com account.

Osiris	A database of publicly listed companies worldwide. It provides financials, ownership, news, ratings, earnings and stock data for the world's publicly quoted companies, including banks and insurance firms from over 130 countries.
Passport	Euromonitor International's global market analysis software platform that analyses industry in countries around the world. It provides industry-specific data sets, coverage of relevant channels and products, long historic and forecast data series, and reports by local analysts analysing the characteristics of countries.

Other libraries: The British Library and City Business Library provide free, onsite access to a number of other sources in this area:

- http://www.bl.uk/eresources/business/cd-busin.html
- http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/business/economic-research-and-information/city-business-library/resource-guides/Pages/Electronic-resources.aspx

Data archives:

The Economist Intelligence Unit	Providing short- to medium-term economic and political forecasts for each of 197 countries, analysis of key developments and major policies creating a picture of countries in the present day and going into the future, as well as industry reports..
ICPSR	The Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research acquires, preserves, enhances, and distributes original social science research data for research and instruction. Access is available to over 500,000 datasets in the social science. You need to create an account in order to download data.
ICRG Researchers' Dataset Table 3B (Political Risk)	The ICRG Researcher's Dataset - Table 3B provides annual averages of the 12 components of ICRG's Political Risk Ratings (Table 3B), as published in the International Country Risk Guide since 1984. Average ratings are provided for all countries covered by ICRG from 1984 through to the last full calendar year.
OECD iLibrary	Contains the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's books and papers published since 1998, as well as a vast collection of statistics, with data going back to the early 1960s. Abstracts only for IEA material (see UK Data Service).
UK Data Service	The UK Data Service is a comprehensive resource funded by the ESRC to support researchers, teachers and policymakers who depend on high-quality social and economic data. Registration is required if you wish to download, order or analyse data online, where this is possible.

Hints, tips & citation

- Research objectives need to be carefully constructed and clearly defined, as they dictate the data needed to be obtained and analysed.
- Is the data sufficient? Are their characteristics suited to, and sufficient for, your study?
- Choose your data from the same databank or family of databanks. There are comparability problems with selecting data from various sources.
- Some databanks have better cross-country comparability than others. For example, OECD data are especially designed for cross-country comparison.
- Consult dataset documentation, user guides and worked examples.
- Examine more information and footnotes. For example, if you're unsure which countries are included in a country group or region.

Data should be considered legitimate, citeable products of research, just as other research outputs, so you must **cite data**! If your department recommends a specific reference style, follow the appropriate form for citing data. The UK Data Service also offers online guidance: http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/use-data/citing-data.aspx. Details of the citation and acknowledgement are set out in the 'Study information and citation' file, available for every dataset from the online documentation table via the relevant catalogue record within Discover. A Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is included in citations. This ensures that even if the location of the data changes, the DOI will always link to the data that were used. Each dataset used must also have a separate citation.

The Harvard citation style uses the following structure:
Author names. Year. Title of resource. [medium type]. Host institution name, Physical location. Date of access. Identifier

e.g. Institute for Social and Economic Research. 2011. Understanding Society: Wave 1 2009-2010 [data file]. University of Essex, Colchester, Essex. Accessed 29 May 2013. SN: 6614. http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/doi/?sn=6614#

The Vancouver citation style uses the following structure:
Author names. Title of resource [medium type]. Host institution name: Physical location; Year of publication. [Date accessed]. Available from: Identifier

e.g. Institute for Social and Economic Research. Understanding Society: Wave 1, 2009-2010 [data file]. University of Essex: Colchester, Essex; 2011. [cited 29 May 2013]. Available from: DOI: http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/doi/?sn=6614#

Further help

- Database help screens & help desks are often very useful.
- ISD offer training to UCL students & staff on data analysis software, e.g. SPSS and Stata. Also view relevant tutorials in lynda.com.
- For further assistance about the sources of socio-economic data we have access to, please contact the Subject Librarian for Economics, Public Policy and History: kieron.jones@ucl.ac.uk