How to find statistical data

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Introduction

To conduct a study or carry out research, sometimes, instead of articles, books, etc. you need numerical data. This data may come in different forms: research results, the number of inhabitants in a town, internet usage habits, chemical formulas, etc. In this section, we will be focusing on statistical data.

1. Statistical data

According to Montanyà (2005), to be able to use statistical data, they have to be comparable. For this reason, there are organisations that have written indicators or elements from which data will be collected, as well as the criteria for their collection. These include:

- ONU ISIC

- RAMON Eurostat Metadata Server at European level

- CNAE of the Office for National Statistics in terms of Spain

The agencies or statistical sources are organisations which collect, process and distribute data. They specialise in thematic or geographical areas:

The Catalan Office for National Statistics collects official statistical data about demographics, the economy, society and Catalonia. It also provides a list of EU Indicators with which to compare Catalonia, Spain, the Euro Zone and the EU. The section entitled Other websites collects links to other data collection agencies and other resources of interest.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Srwf_CLU-BM

In terms of Spain, the Office for National Statistics is responsible for coordinating the Administration's many data collection offices that form part of the Inventory of Statistical Operations of the Central State Administration, as well as data from regional agencies, such as IDESCAT.

Consultations can be made regarding statistics collected about physical surroundings and the environment, demographics and population, society, the economy, science and technology, agriculture, industry, energy and construc-

tion and services. All the information can be consulted separately or jointly from the INEbase database. It is worth mentioning that certificates concerning statistical data are also issued.

Another Spanish statistical data collection agency is the Centre for Sociological Research (CIS), which is primarily responsible for conducting surveys and analysing the results obtained.

The European Statistics System is coordinated by the European Office for Statistics. This agency collects statistical data from all over the European Union and also from each agency in the member countries. The data obtained can be consulted at Eurostat. It includes other databases, such as COMEXT about External Trade and Production.

In international terms, there are a number of organisms that compile statistics. These include the UN. The information is contained in the Undata database. From the homepage, you can access the agencies in each country. It also allows you to make a joint search in different databases, such as: World Tourism Indicators (WTO), World Telecommunications Indicators Data (ITU), part of the data from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), data about childhood, (UNICEF), etc.

Alternatively, you can consult some of the OECD data on its website. The OECD Factbook, which is published every year, can also be downloaded. Other data directories published on development, technology and the economy can be found in libraries, such as the UOC's Virtual Library.

Another organisation which compiles statistics is the World Bank. Its open data collection can be found at Data World Bank. It collects data from some 300 indicators from over 200 different countries in the following areas: agriculture and rural development, infrastructures, aid, employment and social subsidies, the economy and external debt, poverty, education, the private sector, energy and mining, the public sector, environment, science and technology, finance, social development, healthcare and urban development. The fact that these can be consulted openly responds to the Open Data Initiative of the World Bank.

UOC **Information Literacy -- World Bank Data**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEN8ySvfQmk
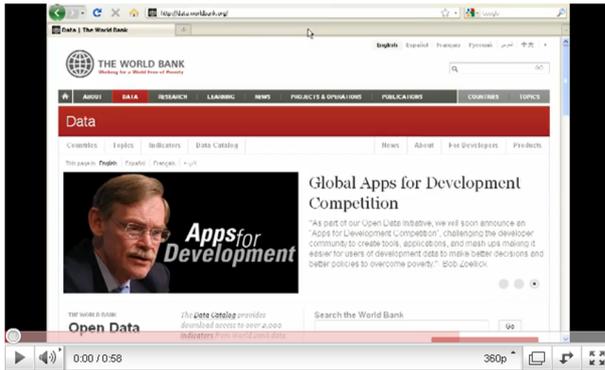
Apart from agencies, companies, associations and the media also compile statistics based on their own data or surveys. These tend to be specialist data in terms of subject matter and geographical location.

Economic and business data can be consulted in the Factiva Reuters database, as they are often not free to access on the web.

Alternatively, for certain studies it may also be interesting to consult articles on statistical and economic data. These can be found in databases such as Econlit.

Lately, the Open Access trend that promotes open and free access to knowledge is also committed to having open-source data depositories which are the result of research. This is what Tim Berners Lee calls Linked Data. This concept includes the statistical data mentioned above, but goes further and includes all types of data.

2. Statistical data about internet use

Today, the presence of organisations on the internet is very widespread. This makes it very important for them to know what their visibility on the net is and what use is being made of their websites.

There are several tools that can be used to achieve this. One of the best known is Alexa. It provides information about the number of visits, visitor profile, their route through the website, etc. and enables these data to be compared with those of other websites.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsKwK-yDxFw

Another tool is Google Analytics which offers the possibility of comparing the usage statistics of a specific website. To do this, you need to enter the source code of the website you wish to analyse, a monitoring engine supplied by Google Analytics.

Other web applications, such as blogs, have their own tools for collecting usage statistics, e.g. WordPress Stats.

Self-evaluation

Consult the Alexa tool and answer the following questions. You can consult the video help

1. The portal of the Open University of the United Kingdom has...

a) Between 3000 and 4000 websites linked to it
b) Between 4000 and 5000 websites linked to it
c) Between 400 and 500 websites linked to it

2. It has a daily consultation percentage...

a) higher than that of the University of Berkeley
b) less than that of the University of Berkeley
c) similar to that of the University of Berkeley

3. It has a world ranking percentage...

a) higher than that of the University of Berkeley
b) less than that of the University of Berkeley
c) similar to that of the University of Berkeley

4. It is mainly accessed from...

a) Google
b) Facebook
c) Infojobs

5. In terms of the audience...

a) More men than women consult the Open University website
b) An equal number of men and women consult the Open University website
c) More women than men consult the Open University website

Consult the database of the World Bank Data and answer the following questions. You can consult the video help.

6. How many patents were granted in Spain to people who were residents in 2008?

a) 3,632
b) 2,527
c) 1,810

7. What was the average life expectancy of women in Rwanda in 2006?

a) 41
b) 73
c) 52

8. Which of the following statements is true?

a) Women in Rwanda had a higher life expectancy in 2008 than in 2005
b) Women in Rwanda had a lower life expectancy in 2008 than in 2005
c) Women in Rwanda had the same life expectancy in 2008 as in 2005

9. If you want to know the percentage of GDP that Belgium uses for military purposes, which of the following sections should you consult?

a) Social development
b) The Public Sector
c) The Financial Sector

10. Where will you find the number of mobile phone contracts per every 100 inhabitants?

a) The Financial Sector
b) Science and technology
c) Social development

11. Which of these countries had the highest percentage of irrigated land in 2006?

a) Japan
b) Cyprus
c) Spain

Answer key

Self-evaluation

1. b

2. c

3. b

4. a

5. c

6. a

7. c

8. a

9. b

10. a

11. a

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