MODULE 5

Searching For Evidence: Sources of Crime Data

Survey Data in Teaching
enhancing critical thinking and
data numeracy

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Module 5:
Searching For Evidence:
Sources of Crime Data

In this module:

- You get a tour of some of the resources available on the web, including
  - UK Data Archive
  - Social Science Information Gateway (SOSIG)
- You learn how to search for other data
- You get a long list of links to other useful sites

The Police Recorded Crime Figures and the British Crime Survey are just two useful sources of data for crime-related statistics. However they are not the only sources,. Access to a computer and a web browser such as Internet Explorer allows the informed individual to harvest information from a number of other likely data sources that can be found on the internet.

UK Data Archive

Perhaps chief among the sources of British economic and social data on the internet is the UK Data Archive (UKDA).

The UKDA is an internationally-renowned centre of expertise in data acquisition, and is curator of the largest collection of digital data in the social sciences and humanities in the UK. Most of the data that the UKDA holds are in the form of numerically-coded datasets (see image) and are derived from social surveys. Datasets in this form are known as raw data, because they have not yet been analysed.

Experienced consumers of data will look for raw data sources on which they can conduct secondary analysis. The term refers to the fact that the analyst has not designed and collected the data themselves but will use the data for their own 'secondary' purposes (in the

case of large-scale official surveys such as the British Crime Survey, 'primary analysis' is usually conducted by a government department).

In the other modules you conduct some secondary analysis yourself. This module, however, is focused on finding potentially useful data.
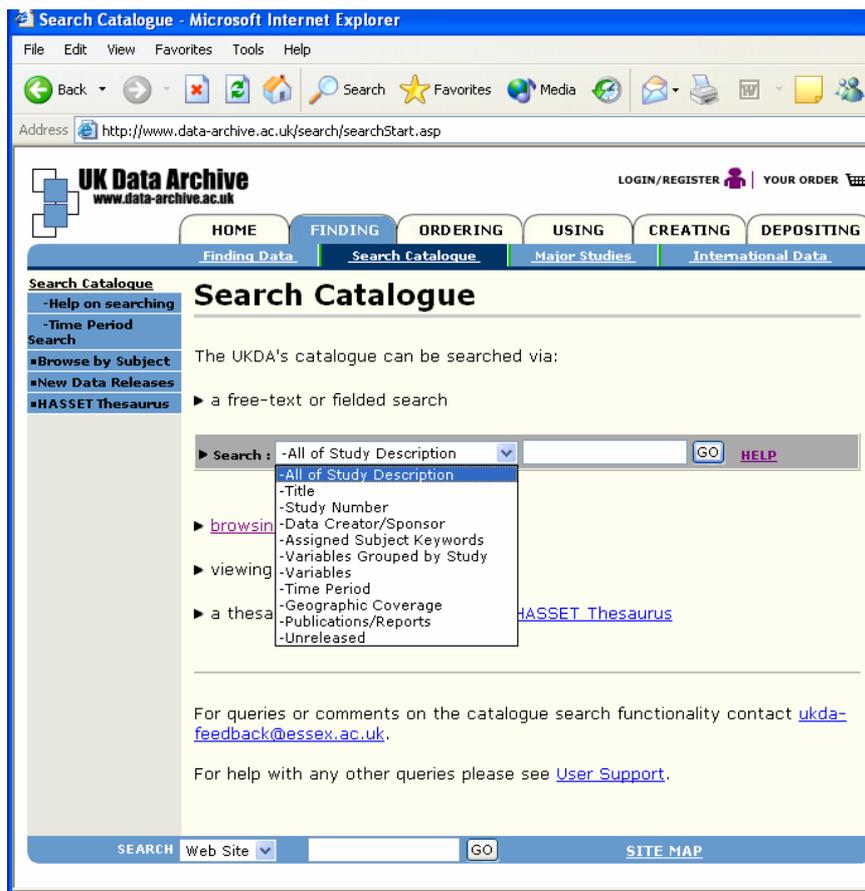
Searching for crime-related data at the UKDA

The UKDA's online catalogue contains a record for each of the several thousand studies held by the UKDA. Each of these records provides information about the study, including an abstract, a list of the main topics covered, information on who deposited the data, when the data were collected and how they can be accessed. A catalogue record will also usually include associated documentation (such as the survey questionnaire) and a list of variables.

The online catalogue is easy to search, and access to the catalogue does not require registration. If you can't immediately find what you are looking for in the catalogue, the UKDA web pages offer alternative means of searching the archive's holdings that you might find more useful.

> **For an example of a catalogue record, click here**.

Search facilities at the UKDA

When searching for data at the UKDA, most users will begin by searching the online catalogue.

The catalogue can be searched in a number of ways. As the image indicates, users can choose a field to search from a drop-down list.

In addition, users can:

- search for terms with the same prefix. For example, to find Scotland, Scottish, Scotsman and so on, users can enter the search term **scot***

- search for an exact phrase by putting quotation marks around the search term, for example "**Scottish crime**"

- combine search terms using AND, OR and AND NOT. For example, typing in

<div align="center">

Scottish AND crime

</div>

would find all studies with both the word Scottish and the word crime.
Note that searches are case independent, it doesn't matter whether or not you use capitals.

'All of Study Description' is the first and default search. This will produce a free-text search on all fields in the list, as well as the abstract and methodology e.g. sampling methods, method of data collection etc. Selecting one of the other fields will provide a more focused search.

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Further help and advice on searching can be found here

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Example: Using the catalogue to search

Access the UKDA's online catalogue.

(i) Suppose you are interested very generally in crime. Type **crime** into the search box on the default search of **All of Study Description** and click 'GO'.

Search : `-All of Study Description ▼` | `crime` | ☐

(ii) You now want to focus your search more clearly. What you are really interested in is fear of crime. Using the drop-down menu, change the search to **Assigned Subject Keywords** and enter **fear of crime** in the search box.

Search : `-Assigned Subject Keywords ▼` | `fear of crime` | ☐

(c) You realise that what in fact you want to access is the British Crime Survey. Select **Title** from the drop-down menu and enter **british crime** in the search box.

Search : `-Title ▼` | `british crime` | ☐

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investigating…

Try searching the catalogue using other words/phrases and search categories. Are there any studies in the UKDA collection where the data creator/sponsor shares your surname?

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Alternatives to the catalogue

The online catalogue is just one means of searching for data in the UKDA collection. There are several other ways. A very general search for data can be undertaken using the **Browse by Subject' facility**.

This facility allows the researcher to track down all those datasets that have been assigned to one (or more) subject area(s) – for example, **Travel and transport** or **Psychology**. So, if you are interested in **Time use** studies – that is, studies that typically record how people spend their day or week – you can check the box next to 'Time use' (see image) and click on the GO button. The page that is produced will list all the UKDA studies that have been assigned to that particular subject category.

If you want to be a little more precise in your searching, **Browse by Subject** allows this too. For those subject categories with a hyperlink (i.e. those with a '+' at the end), clicking on the link will bring up a list of sub-categories that you can search on.

A further search strategy might be to conduct a thesaurus-aided search using the Humanities and Social Science Electronic Thesaurus (HASSET). A HASSET search is based on the same technology as the 'Assigned Subject Keywords' search in the online catalogue.

Go to **HASSET** and enter crime in the keyword box. The results page should be similar to this screen

From here, the researcher has two options:

- first, they could simply click on the Search on Keyword button. Clicking on the button will bring up the list of studies that have the keyword 'crime' assigned to them (this is precisely the same result you would get if you had entered crime as an Assigned Subject Keywords search using the online catalogue);

- the second option available is to broaden, narrow or slightly change the focus of your keyword search.

You will see from the screen that underneath the **Current term** there are three columns – **Broader terms**, **Narrower terms** and **Related terms**. In the example provided, there are no hyperlinks in the Narrower terms column – but, as we will see, this is not always the case. There is just a single alternative in the Broader terms column – social problems. Click on the SOCIAL PROBLEMS hyperlink; on the page that loads, how many narrower terms are listed?
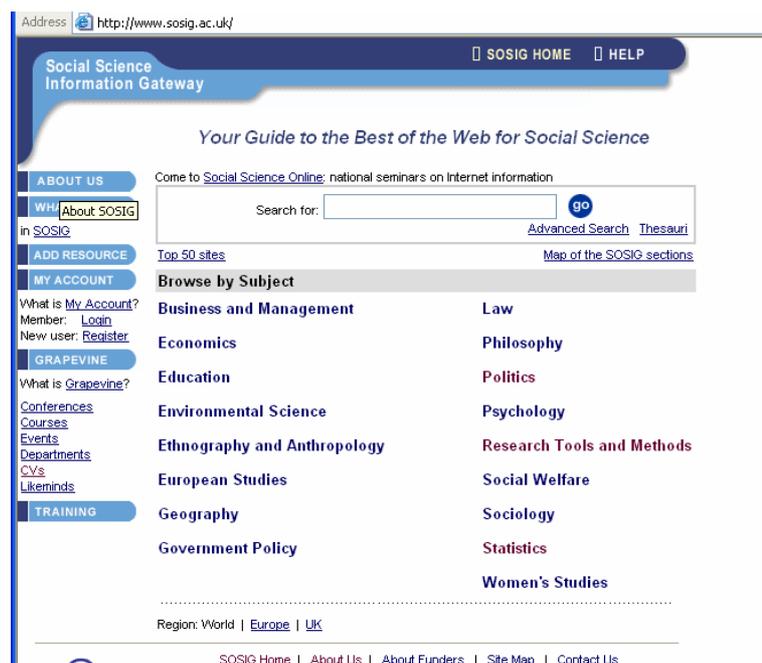
The third column – Related terms – helps the researcher to change the focus of their search by selecting a keyword that is related to the original search term. So, for example, if 'social problems' is our current term, it may be that we are actually interested in beggars. We can then click on the beggars hyperlink and, on the page that loads, click on the **Search on Keyword** button to retrieve a list of catalogue records that have been tagged as containing data on beggars.

Other sources of data on the WWW

Up to this point, this module has focused on sourcing raw data. Of course, we are not always interested in accessing raw data. Very often what we need are statistics, figures or tables that have already been produced. The UKDA web site is not so good for this, but there are other sites that cater for this need.

SOSIG

A good place to start is the Social Science Information Gateway (or SOSIG): www.sosig.ac.uk. SOSIG is a free-to-access internet resource aimed at students, academics and researchers in the fields of social science, business and law. The SOSIG web site has two resources that are likely to be particularly useful in terms of finding data: the SOSIG Internet Catalogue and the Social Science Search Engine.

The Internet Catalogue allows users to search a database of internet resources related to their subject of enquiry. The database has been put together by qualified social scientists and information specialists so you can be sure that the resources are of good quality.

The Social Science Search Engine is a separate online database from the main SOSIG Internet Catalogue. This database is much larger as the resources have been automatically collected by a search site[1]. However, because the resources have been obtained automatically, they have not been checked for their quality.

National Statistics Online

The National Statistics Online site www.statistics.gov.uk is another valuable resource for those interested in accessing published statistics. The National Statistics home page contains a range of links to official data sources and has an especially useful search facility.

Enter **fear of crime** in the search box. Your search will bring up several sources of official data with links to published tables and figures.

Try entering other search terms that you are interested in.

Appendix: Other WWW resources

SOSIG and National Statistics Online are just two of a great many online resources. There are hundreds more. Among them[2]:

UNITED KINGDOM STATISTICS:

National Statistics –

Bookshelf	www.statistics.gov.uk/OnlineProducts/
Department for Education and Skills (DfES) statistics	www.dfes.gov.uk/statistics/
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) statistics	statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/
Department of Health (DOH) statistics	www.doh.gov.uk/public/stats3.htm
Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) statistics	
	www.dtlr.gov.uk/statistics/
Education	www.statistics.gov.uk/themes/education/
Government Actuary's Department	www.gad.gov.uk
Health and care	www.statistics.gov.uk/themes/health_care/
Labour market	www.statistics.gov.uk/themes/labour_market/
Neighbourhood statistics	www.statistics.gov.uk/neighbourhood/
Population and migration	www.statistics.gov.uk/themes/population/
Statbase®	www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/
The Economy	www.statistics.gov.uk/themes/economy/
UK 2004: Official Yearbook of the UK	www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=5703

SCOTTISH STATISTICS:

Carstairs Scores for Scottish Postcode Sectors from the 1991 Census	
	www.msoc-mrc.gla.ac.uk/Reports/Pages/PHRU_MAIN.html
EDINA – Edinburgh Data and Information Access	edina.ed.ac.uk
Edinburgh Facts and Figures	
	www.edinburgh.gov.uk/CEC/City_Development/Economic_Development_and_Estates/Edinburgh_Facts_and_Figures/content.html
Edinburgh University Data Library	datalib.ed.ac.uk
Gateway to Scotland, provided by Geography Department, Edinburgh University	
	www.geo.ed.ac.uk/home/scotland/scotland.html
Gazetteer for Scotland	www.geo.ed.ac.uk/scotgaz/
Health Education Board for Scotland, statistics database	
	www.hebs.scot.nhs.uk/services/data/searchstats.htm
ISD, Scottish health statistics	www.show.scot.nhs.uk/isd/Scottish_Health_Statistics/SHS2000/home.htm
Mid-year population estimates	wood.ccta.gov.uk/grosweb/grosweb.nsf/pages/popest
National Library of Scotland	www.nls.uk
National Statistics – Scotland neighbourhood statistics	
	www.statistics.gov.uk/neighbourhood/scotland.asp
Population statistics, provided by Geography Department, Edinburgh University	
	www.geo.ed.ac.uk/home/scotland/pop.html
Scottish Abstract of Statistics	www.scotland.gov.uk/library/sas/sa00-00.htm
Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries	scurl.ac.uk
Scottish Council for Research in Education	www.scre.ac.uk
Scottish Economic History Database, 1550 – 1780	
	www.ex.ac.uk/~ajgibson/scotdata/scot_database_home.html
Scottish Executive – Scottish Social Statistics	www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/sss/sss-00.asp
Scottish Executive statistics	www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/
Scottish Executive, Central Research Unit	www.scotland.gov.uk/cru/whatiscru.asp
Scottish Further Education Funding Council	www.sfefc.ac.uk
Scottish Higher Education Funding Council	www.shefc.ac.uk
Scottish Local Government Information Unit	www.slgiu.gov.uk/about/
Scottish Parliament	www.scottish.parliament.uk
Scottish Statistics, 2000	www.scotland.gov.uk/library2/doc16/ss2-00.asp
Scottish Statistics, 2001	www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/misc/ssfc-00.asp
Scottish Statistics, provided by Glasgow University Library	
	www.lib.gla.ac.uk/Depts/MOPS/Offpub/scotstat.html

WELSH STATISTICS:

Data Wales	www.data-wales.co.uk
National Assembly for Wales – Statistics for Wales	www.wales.gov.uk/keypubstatisticsforwales/
National Assembly for Wales	www.wales.gov.uk
National Statistics – Wales neighbourhood statistics	www.statistics.gov.uk/neighbourhood/wales.asp
Network Wales	www.network.wales.org.uk
V Wales	www.red4.co.uk/About Wales/about_wales.htm
Wales GenWeb	www.walesgenweb.com
Welsh Library at University of Wales, Bangor	www.bangor.ac.uk/is/llyfrcym/welshlib.htm

NORTHERN IRISH STATISTICS:

Agricultural Research Institute of Northern Ireland	www.arini.ac.uk
Conflict Archive on the INteret (CAIN) - Ulster University	cain.ulst.ac.uk
Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland	www.delni.gov.uk
Department for Regional Development Northern Ireland	www.drdni.gov.uk
Department for Social Development Northern Ireland	www.dsdni.gov.uk
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure Northern Ireland	www.dcalni.gov.uk
Department of Education in Northern Ireland	www.deni.gov.uk
Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment for NI	www.detini.gov.uk
Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety	www.dhsspsni.gov.uk
Dept of Education in Northern Ireland - Key Information and Statistics	www.deni.gov.uk/statistics/
General Register Office Northern Ireland	www.groni.gov.uk
Geological Survey of Northern Ireland - British Geological Survey	www.bgs.ac.uk/gsni/
Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland	www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk
N. Ireland Health and Personal Social Services Web Pages	www.n-i.nhs.uk
National Statistics – Northern Ireland neighbourhood statistics	
	www.statistics.gov.uk/neighbourhood/n_ireland.asp
NISRA - Census	www.nisra.gov.uk/census/start.html
North of Ireland Family History Society	www.nifhs.org
Northern Ireland Assembly	www.ni-assembly.gov.uk
Northern Ireland Cancer Registry	www.qub.ac.uk/nicr/intro.htm
Northern Ireland Economic Council	niec.org.uk
Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre	www.qub.ac.uk/nierc
Northern Ireland Elections Site	explorers.whyte.com
Northern Ireland Executive	www.nics.gov.uk
Northern Ireland GenWeb	www.rootsweb.com/~nirwgw/
Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey	www.qub.ac.uk/ss/csr/nilt/
Northern Ireland Office Online	www.nio.gov.uk/links.htm
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency	www.nisra.gov.uk
Northern Ireland Statistics	capacitybuilder.co.uk/stats.htm
Northern Ireland Tourist Board Research Department	www.nitb.com/tourismfacts/
Northern Ireland Transport Statistics	
	www.doeni.gov.uk/statistics/TRANSPORT_ANNUAL/PDF/9899/sec29899.pdf
Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland	www.osni.gov.uk
Public Record Office Northern Ireland	proni.nics.gov.uk
Youth Council for Northern Ireland – Research	www.youthcouncil-ni.org.uk/Research/right-research.htm

LONDON STATISTICS:

Focus on London 2000	www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=1229

EUROPEAN STATISTICS:

Eurostat	europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datashop/print-catalogue/EN?catalogue=Eurostat

INTERNATIONAL STATISTICS:

OECD statistics	www.oecd.org/statistics/
United Nations Industrial Development Organization – Geographical reference guide	
	www.unido.org/regions.cfm?TY=R&RID=04
United Nations Statistics Division	www.un.org/Depts/unsd/

AGRICULTURE:

National Statistics – Bookshelf: Agriculture (UK)

www.statistics.gov.uk/OnlineProducts/default.asp#agriculture

CRIME/JUSTICE:

National Statistics – Bookshelf: Crime/Justice   www.statistics.gov.uk/OnlineProducts/default.asp#crime

ECONOMY:

Bureau of Economic Analysis (US)	www.bea.doc.gov
Economic Statistics (UN)	www.un.org/Depts/unsd/sd_economic.htm
European Central Bank - Statistics (EU)	www.ecb.int/stats/stats.htm
FedStats (US)	www.whitehouse.gov/fsbr/esbr.html
National Statistics – Bookshelf: Economy (UK)	

www.statistics.gov.uk/OnlineProducts/default.asp#economy

National Statistics – The Economy (UK)	www.statistics.gov.uk/themes/economy/
OECD Statistics (OECD)	www.oecd.org/oecd/pages/home/displaygeneral/0,3380,EN-home-

20-nodirectorate-no-no-no-20,FF.html

Stat-USA® (US)	www.stat-usa.gov
World Bank Group Data (global)	www.worldbank.org/data/

EDUCATION:

DfES Statistics (UK)	www.dfes.gov.uk/statistics/
Higher Education Statistics Agency (UK)	www.hesa.ac.uk
National Center for Education Statistics (US)	nces.ed.gov
National Statistics – Bookshelf: Education (UK)	

www.statistics.gov.uk/OnlineProducts/default.asp#education

National Statistics – Education (UK)	www.statistics.gov.uk/themes/education/
World Education Indicators (UNESCO)	unescostat.unesco.org/en/stats/stats0.htm

EMPLOYMENT:

National Statistics – Bookshelf: Labour Market (UK)   www.statistics.gov.uk/OnlineProducts/default.asp#labour

ENVIRONMENT:

Environment Statistics (UN)   www.un.org/Depts/unsd/enviro/environment.htm

HEALTH:

DOH statistics (UK)	www.doh.gov.uk/public/stats3.htm
National Center for Health Statistics (US)	www.cdc.gov/nchs/
National Statistics – Bookshelf: Health (UK)	www.statistics.gov.uk/OnlineProducts/default.asp#health
National Statistics – Health and care (UK)	www.statistics.gov.uk/themes/health_care/
OECD Health (OECD)	www1.oecd.org/els/health/software/
WHOSIS (global)	www.who.int/whosis/
World Health Organisation (global)	www.who.dk/country/country.htm

POPULATION/MIGRATION:

AmeriStat (US)	www.ameristat.org
Census Bureau (US)	www.census.gov
Demographia (UK)	www.demographia.com/dbx-uk.htm
Demographic and Social Statistics (UN)	www.un.org/Depts/unsd/sd_social.htm
Government Actuary's Department (UK)	www.gad.gov.uk/policy_and_stats/population_projections.htm
National Statistics – Bookshelf: Population/Migration (UK)	

www.statistics.gov.uk/OnlineProducts/default.asp#population

National Statistics – Population and Migration (UK)	www.statistics.gov.uk/themes/population/
Popnet (global)	www.popnet.org
World Populations Trends (UN)	www.undp.org/popin/wdtrends/wdtrends.htm

TRANSPORT/TRAVEL:

National Statistics – Bookshelf: Transport (UK) www.statistics.gov.uk/OnlineProducts/default.asp#transport

SUMMARY

- You toured of some of the resources available on the web, including the UK Data Archive and Social Science Information Gateway (SOSIG).
- You learned how to search for other data
- You explored links to other useful sites to do with statistics, such as the National Statistics Online web site

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[1] These are web sites such as Google, Altavista, MSN search which are used as online web directories.
[2] Note that these are correct as at May 2004, but are liable to change. These are sites external to the UK Data Archive, and access and content cannot be vouchsafed.