Q-STEP ACCESSING DATA 'HOW TO' GUIDES: USING THE UK DATA SERVICE

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The ESRC-backed UK Data Service hosts an enormous range of data generated or fielded in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and as such can be a brilliant resource for social scientists. However, owing to its large size and particular arrangements, it can often be a bit daunting and tricky for first-time (and often even returning) users to make sense of and access.

This guide will walk explain to users the purpose and arrangements of the UK Data Service, what is contained within it, and how to navigate its systems to download data. It is split into the following sections:

- 1. What is the UK Data Service?
- 2. What kind of data can be found through the UK Data Service?
- 3. How do we access and download data from the UK Data Service?

Users familiar with the UK Data Service may want to move straight to section three.









1. What is the UK Data Service?

The <u>UK Data Service</u> is the product of extensive data collection, curation and processing efforts provided by the University of Essex and the University of Manchester with the support of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

The UK Data Service provides access, support, guidance, development, and sharing of data generated by British and Northern Irish social science researchers according to its webpage. The service hosts and provides access to "major UK government-sponsored surveys, cross-national surveys, longitudinal studies, UK Census data, international aggregate, business data, and qualitative data" all in one place.

As such, it is absolutely vital that researchers familiarise themselves with and are able to make use of the Service's facilities. However, owing to its large size and various legal and practical arrangements, it can often appear quite daunting and inaccessible to first-time (and also sometimes even returning) users. As well as big, longitudinal resources such as the European Social Survey, British Election Study and the British Household Panel surveys, independent

(teams of) UK-based researchers – particularly those on funded ESRC grants – will often publish their individual datasets on the Service for dissemination and open-access purposes.

This guide will walk users through how to search and access data provided by the UK Data Service.

2. What kind of data can be found through the UK Data Service?

As mentioned above, the extensive catalogue of data provided by the UK Data Service includes cross-national and UK-based surveys, international and national statistics, official government research and surveys, qualitative data, administrative data, and many more.

The easiest way to find out what kind of data is available (and to check if your desired resource has been collected and is available through the UK Data Service) is to visit the <u>'About our data</u>' page and making use of the 'Key data' and 'Data by Theme' tabs and the 'Discover UK Data Service' search function. Click the hyperlink above and you will be taken to the following page:





i. Search using the 'Key data' tab

The quickest and easiest way to look for data hosted on the UK Data Service is through the 'Key data' tab. Selecting the tab from the menu on the left-hand side will bring up a page looking like this:





As we can see, the data is organised into a variety of macro-categories: UK surveys, cross-national surveys, longitudinal studies, international microdata, census data, business microdata, qualitative/mixed methods data, and administrative data. Under each tab, the most popular and largest databases falling within each category are listed alphabetically.

Under 'UK surveys' for example are the Annual Population Surveys, British Social Attitudes and British Election Studies, and the Labour Force Survey. Listed under the 'cross-national surveys' tab are things like the Eurobarometer, European Election Study, and the European Social Survey. Meanwhile, studies such as the British Household Panel Survey, National Child Development Study, and Understanding Society study are each listed within the 'longitudinal studies' filing.

ii. Search using the 'Data by theme' tab

The 'Data by theme' tab collates UK Data Service archive data by the main theme of the survey, study, or resource. Clicking the tab loads the following page:



Under each theme is a comprehensive description of the type of data listed under it, as well as the sub-categories which are also compiled into the category. For example, the 'Politics' tab contains resources covering the topics of 'political opinions, civic participation, elections, political parties', among others. Click on the 'Politics' tab to load the following page:





As we can see, within each macro-category there are further tabs: 'Key data', 'Discover', 'Research', and 'Resources'. Scrolling down on the 'Key data' page takes us through some of the most popular and largest politics resources available from the UK Data Service, including some information on coverage and the topics included.

Listed under the 'Research' tab are examples of studies which have used politics data from the UK Data Service, while the 'Resources' tab links through to further related politics content.

The 'Discover' tab walks users through how to use the 'Discover UK Data Service' search function to look for further politics data. We will go through how to use this part of the service in the next section.

iii. Search using the 'Discover UK Data Service' function

To look for a resource not listed under any of the 'Key data' or 'Data by theme' tabs, we can make use of the 'Discover UK Data Service' search function. The archive search tool can be accessed directly by following <u>this hyperlink</u>, or clicking any 'Discover' link on the UK Data Service website. The 'Discover' homepage looks as follows:





Owing to the huge amount of data collected and archived at the UK Data Service. By using filters and taking advantage of the free text search form, we can quite quickly get our heads around how to look for specific data listed in this wide ranging resource.

Firstly, the filters down the left-hand side are perhaps the most important feature of the search function. Without it, we will be inundated with results matching a simple string of keywords. For example, searching for 'public opinion Britain' in the dialogue box without any filters brings up 884 individual datasets (at the time of writing – of course the archive is constantly being expanded and added to!). The huge range of public opinion data listed at the archive includes polling series from organisations such as Gallup and Ipsos MORI, as well as a variety of project datasets such as from the 'Perspectives on the adaptations of immigrants in Britain' (Lessard-Phillips 2017) and the 'Public perceptions of climate change and personal experience of flooding' (Pidgeon et al. 2016) projects.

Let's suppose we are looking for information on public attitudes toward gender equality before 2000. Searching through 884 databases for such information would not be a good use of our time. We can use the filters and the free text design of the search function to quickly narrow down our results.



The first option is to include or exclude certain 'types' of articles held in the archive. These include 'Data collections' (the only category selected by default), 'Case studies', 'Series'. 'ESRC outputs', and 'Support / how to guides'. Let's assume that we are interested in all potential data sources, so we opt to include case studies, series, and ESRC outputs.

Opening the 'subject' tab allows us to narrow down the search according to topic. Click 'show more' to launch a dialogue box which includes the full list of topics available, which should look like this:



Let's narrow our search by selecting the 'Politics', 'Social Stratifications and Groupings', and 'Society and Culture' options. Let's also assume that we want to make sure of either high quality survey or project-based data, and so we are excluding 'Regular opinion polls' even though they could potentially contain some information on gender attitudes.

Applying these terms brings our number of databases down to 648. Our period of interest (as above) is pre-2000, and so we can use the 'Date' filter to remove more unwanted items from the results. Specifically, we can alter the 'To' selection within the 'Date' tab to the year 2000. This narrows our results down to 297.



There are a number of other filters which we could make use of – limiting the data by country, by type (which is very useful for pulling out quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods surveys), depositors, and much more. Finally, we can make use of the free text search box to reduce our results further. Free text search functions allow us to make and implement logical text arguments within searches – for example using words such as OR, AND, and NOT (must be in capitals) as logical functions to adjust the way that the archive searches using our text inputs. Helpfully, the search box itself provides information on how to use these functions and some example if you click inside it. Doing so should bring up the following dialogue box:



The obvious first step is to add the word 'gender' to our search term. Let's assume that we are not however interested in anything to do with elections, and that we have already collected gender opinions data from the British Election Study. We can use the NOT argument to exclude this sort of information by adding 'NOT election'. We can also add AND terms between the words we are interested in to further reduce the hits. Finally, we can use quotation marks around two or more terms to create an exact search for the phrase. For our purposes, we can wrap 'public opinion' quotation marks to help us narrow the field. Searching for "public opinion" AND Britain AND gender NOT election' produces just 10 results, as seen below:





This is a much more manageable amount of resources to check through.

3. How do we access and download data from the UK Data Service?

Following the above example, let's suppose that we want to download and analysis the 'Attitudes to Social Issues, April 1975' file as it contains questions on the topic of abortion – an important topic in gender opinions. Click on the study to bring up the following page which details descriptive information about the study, its depositors, the citation, among other things.



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				You are no	t logged in Login to Dis	cover Site Search FAQ Help Contact	
UK Data Service Discover	About us	Get data	Use data	Manage data	Deposit data	News and events	
	Discover > Catalogue						
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Variable and question bank	UK Data Service data catalogue record for:						
QualiBank	Attitudes to Social Issues, April 1975						
	Documentation Publications Syntax						
	TITLE DETAILS					~	
	SN:	1105					
	Title:	Attitude	es to Social Issues	April 1975			
	Persistent identifier:	10.525	5/UKDA-SN-1105-	1			
	Depositor:	Lemon	, D., Gay News				
	Depositor:	NOP N	larket Research Li	nited			
	Principal investigator(s): NOP N	larket Research Li	nited			
	Data collector(c):	Gay N	sws Iarket Beesereb Lie	wited			
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	The citation for this st	udy is:					
	NOP Market Research Limited, Gay News. Attitudes to Social Issues, April 1975. [data collection]. UK Data Service. SN: 1105,						
	nttp://doi.org/10.5255/L	JKDA-SN-110	10-1				

Scrolling down the page, we come to the 'Abstract' section which details the contents and topics covered in the data. Here we see abortion listed, as well as potentially other relevant topics such as birth control and divorce.

Further down is the study documentation – a very important collection of information which all researchers should familiarise themselves with for each individual dataset they are working with. Included in this is the questionnaire and study information. The former allows us to inspect in detail the question wording and response categories offered, while the later gives us information about the sampling, contact, and interview procedures used to carry out the research.

To download the database, and any other UK Data Service data files, follow these next few steps.

i. Setting up an Account

Scrolling back to the top of the screen, the 'Download/Order' tab appears to the right underneath the title of the dataset (Attitudes to Social Issues, April 1975). Clicking this link will direct you to the following page which invites you to either log in or register an account with the UK Data Service:





If you have already created an account, skip this step and move down to the following one. If not, proceed by clicking the 'see Registration' hyperlink as seen above. There is also a handy guide provided by the UK Data Service which can be accessed using the 'Advice for new users' link.

Registration with the UK Data Service is necessary so that usage and publication with archived data can be tracked and reported. This helps the archive continue to attract funding and financial support for its activities.

Follow the <u>registration hyperlink</u> to be brought to the following screen:





This page is purely information, but it does guide you through the process nicely. University (and other higher or further education institution) students or staff members can access the UK Data Service archives through their institutional log ins.

Click the 'REGISTER' link on the top-right of the page which will return you back to the previous log in page. From here, click 'Log in to the UK Data Service' to the taken to the following page:

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	UK Data Service		
	Delivering quality social and economic data resource	ıs.	
	Which organisation would you like to si	gn in with?	
Start ty appear	bing the name of your organisation • (e.g. Anywhere College) in the so below:	earch box, and options will	
	Type the name of your organisation	Continue	
	or Let me choose from a list		
	Need help logging in?		
	The UK Access Management Federation Accessibility statement Privacy and Cookies Policy		
	Search over All Sites		



Here, input your University/other HE/FE institution name to be taken through to your usual intuitional log in home page. There, fill out your usual log in information whereupon you will be taken back into the UK Data Service system and presented with a page asking if you are a 'New user' or an 'Existing user'.

Select 'New user' and fill out the registration form which follows (you may be asked to log in once more through your institutional site). This will be followed by an 'End user licence' which you should read to get a sense of your responsibilities regarding usage, reporting, and accrediting UK Data Service data.

ii. Registering a New Usage

Once you have completed your registration, you should be redirected back to the Attitudes to Social Issues, April 1975 database. If not, <u>click this link</u> to be taken straight back to the page.

Hit the 'Download/Order' link once again. After proceeding through log in (again) you will then be asked to 'register a new use of data'. Follow the link and fill out the form which follows:

	l sp.ukdataservice.ac.uk Ĉ	0 1 - +
UK Data Service Vor retails Usage details Usage details Order history Special Condition	Register a new use of data You must register all new uses of the data, including re-use of data already supplied to you, but for a different purpose. Each usage will expire two years from the date that it was registered, however, you can apply to extend the expiry date. Please note that entries are vetted and you may be asked to re-enter information if your description is inappopriate. If you are working on an existing usage and need additional data go straight to Usage details. Intended use of data SELECT INTENDED USE OF DATA 00 Commercial use is usage undertaxen within or under the direction of a commercial organisation for commercial or profit-making purposes. Please note that if you do not choose the correct intended use, you may be in breach of the End User Licence that you agreed to when you registered with the UK Data Service. Usage title	Contact UK Data Service UK Data Service Were are some links to get started with the service: Data Catalogue major studies are now called sey data lean about access to UK Census data lean our FAQS for current users get in touch with questions or comments
	Enter grant number if known Share usage details: The UK Data Service has a facility to enable you to view the information given by researchers applying to use UK Data Service data. These details are available from the <u>Data in use</u> pages. To share your name, institution, usage title and description, and information about the datasets used for this usage, please select the checkbox. Teaching Select the checkbox if this use of data is for teaching purposes within the academic education sector.	

'Intended use of data' should be non-commercial. The 'usage title' the title for the project which we are using the data for. Let's use 'Gender opinions' for our example. We then have to fill out a brief description of what we are using the data for within the project. For example, we might write for our gender opinions project:



"This data will form one resource in a larger study which is looking for information on people's attitudes toward gender in the late 20th century for a longitudinal analysis. The questions on abortion, divorce, and birth control will be of particular interest."

If there is a grant – external funding from a research council, for instance – associated with the project, fill out the 'Enter grant number if known' box. We can also indicate if we want to publicly share our usage or declare the data download to be for teaching purposes.

Finally, we have to indicate what topic our research project falls under. For our gender opinions example, this would be 'Politics – Political behaviour and attitudes'.

Click 'go' once all the information has been entered. The following screen will be visible which shows our selected dataset now listed within our gender opinions project:

	l sp.ukdataservice.ac.uk ℃	• • • +
UK Data Service	Datasets for usage 127374 - Gender opinions Use the download column to download new or request for download or the other media column to e.g. request data on CD. Add more ediasets to this usage below.	Contact UK Data Service
Your account Your details Usage details Order history Special Conditions	Study Description Status Download Explore Online Other media 1105 Attitudes to Social Issues, April 1975 Download - - - - 600	Here are some links to get started with the service:
	All requests are usually mode available within 15 working days. Download requests are usually supplied in SPSS, STATA, TAB and RTF (qualitative only) formats and include documentation (in Adoe Acrobat PDF format). If data are required on CD or in another format, please use the 'Other media' option. Add a dataset to this usage - enter the study number (e.g. 1234) If you do not know the study number(s), find datasets using <u>Search catalogue</u> , <u>Major studies</u> and use the 'Download/Order' links to add the study to this usage.	Discover is the new Data Catalogue major studies are now called key data learn about access to UK Consus data login to your ascount desodit data
	Details for this usage	ced in twees current users e <u>ct in touch</u> with questions or comments
The UK bata Service is fund	d by the ESRC with contributions from the University of Essex and the University of Manchester relaty of Essex and University of Manchester. All rights reserved.	Terms and conditions Cookies

'To download the data, simply click the 'Download' button!

i**ii. Adding Data**



One of the big advantages of registering projects with the UK Data Service is that we can easily add further datasets to the project, creating a handy collection of relevant data under our user accounts.

From the project screen, datasets can be added using their 'study number' (according to the archive's listing). Alternatively, if we don't already know any further study numbers, we can launch another search for gender opinion related debates and add them in manually.

Return to the archive search function using <u>this hyperlink</u>, and re-enter the filters (Type: 'Case studies', 'Series', 'ESRC outputs'. Subject: 'Politics', 'Social Stratifications and Groupings', and 'Society and Culture'. Date range: pre-2000) and search terms from previous: "'public opinion" AND Britain AND gender NOT election'.

The 'Britain in the Seventies, 1971' database looks like it might be of interest to our gender opinions project. Click on the database link, and then on 'Download/Order' as before (again, you may be asked to re-establish your log in). The following page will appear:

	i sp.ukdataservice.ac.uk ℃		0 1 0 +
UK Data Service	All your usages below have expired then either <u>register a new use of data</u> or get in touch to and the axpiry date. ² proceed with your order, please select a usage or <u>register a new use of data</u> and click on d datasets. <u>1D Number</u> <u>Title</u> <u>Expiry date</u> <u>127374</u> <u>Gender opinions</u> <u>22/5/2020</u> <i>Add Datasets</i>	Contact UK Data Service	
The UK Data Service is funded by 1 © Copyright 2012-2018 University	ne ESRC with contributions from the University of Essex and the University of Manchester of Essex and University of Manchester. All rights reserved.	Terms and conditions Coddles	

'Whenever we want to download a new database, the UK Data Service will ask us to either 'register a new use of data' or 'Add datasets' to an already established project. We only have one project listed for now, but each new project we create using our UK Data Archive accounts will appear on this page.



In our case, we want to add the "Britain in the Seventies, 1971" to our gender opinions project, and so we opt for the 'Add Datasets' option. However, if we were to come back with a new project and a different database, this would require a new registration (exactly the same process as we went through to register the gender opinions project).

Select the gender opinions project (using the circular button on the left-hand side of the table) and then hit 'Add Datasets'. We will then be taken back to our gender opinions project page and will now see that the "Britain in the Seventies, 1971" database how now been added to it and is available for download:

	i sp.ukdataservice.ac.uk Č	0 6 7 +
UK Data Service	Datasets for usage 127374 - Gender opinions Use the download column to download now or request for download or the other media column to e.g. request data mot D. Add more datasets to this usage below.	Contact. LIK. Data. Service
Your account Your details	SN Study Description Status Download Explore Online Other media	
Usage details Order history	84 Britain in the Seventies, 1971 Download - 1105 Attitudes to Social Issues, April 1975 Download -	Here are some links to get
Special Conditions	1105 Attitudes to Social Issues. April 1925 Download - CO CO CO CO All requests are usually made available within 15 working days. Download requests are usually supplied in SPSS, STATA, TAB and RTF (qualitative only) formats and include documentation (in Addoe Acroba DPF format). If data are required on CD or in another format, please use the 'Other media' option. Add adtaset to this usage - enter the study number (e.g. 1234) CO If you do not know the study number(s), find datasets using <u>Search catalogue</u> , <u>Major studies</u> and use the 'Download'Ore' links to add the study to this usage. Order or view previous orders for datasets from a non-UK archive that do not have a study number in our online catalogue	Here are some links to get started with the service: • Discover is the new Data Catalogue major studies are now called key data • learn about sccess to UK Census data • login to your account • deposit data • read our FAQS for current users • qet in touch with questions or comments
The UK Data Service is fun	Details for this usage of by the SSRC with contributions from the University of Essex and the University of Manchester evently of Essex and University of Manchester. All rights reserved.	Terms and conditions Cookies

'And there we have it! How do search for and download (via account and project creation) data from the UK Data Service!

