

PLSC 197 / SODA 197N: Social Data, Technology, and Artificial Intelligence

Extra Credit Exercise: Sources of Social Data
January 22, 2026

Exercise

Using Onuoha's (2016) five points as a framework, consider the five main sources of social data mentioned in the slides: *official records*, *digital archives*, *social media*, *commercial data*, and *platform traces*. First, fill out the following table, giving:

1. One *example* of that kind of data,
2. An indication of who *controls* that example data source, and
3. An example of something (or things) that is/are *missing* from those data – that is, data on individuals that is not available from that source.

	Example	Who Controls?	What's Missing?
Official Records			
Digital Archives			
Social Media			
Commercial Data			
Platform Traces			

Second, answer each of the following questions in a sentence or two:

1. Which source(s) feel most legitimate, and why?
2. Which feel the most invasive, and why?
3. Which are easiest / hardest to opt out of?

Details

This exercise should be submitted *electronically*, in *PDF format*, and should include your name and the date of submission. To receive credit, the assignment must be completed and submitted by Thursday, January 29, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. ET. Submit your assignment by emailing it to Dr. Zorn (at zorn@psu.edu) and Mr. Memovic (at arif.memovic@psu.edu). Exercises received prior to the due date will receive ten points of extra credit in the course; those submitted after the due date will receive zero points.