Data Sleuthing

An imperfect formula for finding interesting stories within data sets.

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Reverse order works, too, meaning some people like to start with the data.

1

Research

Reading articles (archived and recent) around a subject and speaking to various experts can give you an idea what data to look at, what questions to ask of your data and what caveats to look for within your data. They can also help confirm or question hypotheses.

SOURCES

Lexis Nexis
Academics
Government officials
NGO workers

2

Hypothesis

Based on your research and/or data reporting, formulate a hypothesis. What is your story about?

BASES FOR STORIES

Are there trends over time?
Anomalies and outliers (that aren't explained through changes in data collection, errors in the data, etc.)?
Are there interesting relationships between different data sets (correlatioal or causational)?

3

Data reporting and analysis

Find data and analyze it to find your story. You want to be proving your hypothesis or finding one through the data analysis.

THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR DATA

Merge
Sort
Summarize
Isolate and filter
Visualize for analysis

4

Storytelling

Your data story can be many things! It can be:

A written story with a data-backed nutgraf
A data visualization that has a strong point but also allows you to explore more data
A news app that makes large data sets accesible