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**Research and Data Manager**
**RAC Foundation**

## What does your company do?

The RAC Foundation is a transport policy and research organisation which explores the economic, mobility, safety and environmental issues relating to roads and their users. We publish reports and comment on transport policy issues.

## What is your role?

I am Research & Data Manager. I do research, manage research projects done by others and I oversee the (increasingly) automated data analysis system we have to more quickly respond with accurate information. I also sit on a number of stakeholder panels and committees (including at Transport Focus, the British Parking Association and the FIA).

## Describe a typical mapping or spatial analysis task conducted in your role?

Unlike many in the industry, we cover a wide range of topics and a wide area (almost always GB or UK), but at the most granular scale we can get at. Much of the work is either making data more accessible or intuitive to the layperson (web maps), or connecting datasets that otherwise wouldn't be connected - like how many drivers live outside of the areas with competitive fuel markets? I do this in R and QGIS and Google App Script. I'm trying to wean the office off of Excel!

## What career path did you follow into your current job?

I did a BA, MA and PhD in Geography at Liverpool - but all of that was very qualitative, and all very transport focused. I then did a postdoc at the Technical University of Munich which was about adding qualitative nuance to quantitative analysis.

## What advice would you give a student wishing to start a Geographic Data Science career in your industry?

Do work in areas you know and care about. I've seen a lot of complex, clever data science which fails because they know the techniques but not the actual subject matter they are looking at. Also, it is easier to learn and improve if you study what you love.

## Where do you see the Geographic Data Science industry going in the next 10 years?

I think that the basic display of data will become like charts in Excel - not great, but very common and easy, and therefore no longer a particularly marketable skill for employment. As people not in the industry realise what can be done, they will demand more and more local and specific analysis (rightly or wrongly!). I think a lot of glossy work done now will look a bit like transitions in PowerPoint and clipart in 10 years, a bit naff - what will matter is sound, readily available analysis.