

**38 excuses** © Copyright 2002 The Poynter Institute

1. We **don't know how** to do that.
2. It's **too late** in the day to do that.
3. It **takes too long**.
4. The **person that knows how** to do that is on **vacation** for two weeks / doesn't work here anymore.
5. It **costs too much** money for us to do it.
6. We've **never done that** before.
7. We won't give you the records, you might use it as a **mailing list**.
8. Our compilation is **not public record**.
9. We'll have to **get approval** from each agency that contributed data.
10. We **don't like what you plan to do** with it.
11. We **don't keep our data that way**.
12. There are **confidential records mixed** in.
13. We **don't think you'll understand** the data / technology, **you'll mess it up**.
14. We **don't keep that on computer**.
15. We keep it on computer but **we'll only give you paper**.
16. We've done that kind of **analysis already**.
17. We'll **give you the reports**.
18. **You don't have the equipment** to handle it.
19. The **computer can't make files**.
20. Our **programmer is too busy** with official business.
21. If we give it to you, **we'll have to give it to everyone**.
22. We'd love to give it to you but it **violates our contract** with the software company.
23. We **don't know how to work our own computer**.
24. We **don't have the machine** that can read that record type anymore.
25. You don't know the difference between 1600 and 6250 and we won't give it to you because **you don't know anything**.
26. I **don't understand your request**.
27. We're afraid **you'll get into our mainframe** and corrupt our data.
28. Let me see **something in writing**, we'll get back to you.
29. We **don't have to give it to you**.
30. There's **nothing in the state record** laws that says anything **about electronic records**, therefore...
31. We'll be glad to do that for you when **we have our new system up** - should be real soon now.
32. A **private firm maintains the information** - contact them.
33. The data is cheap, but **you have to buy the software**, and it's not.
34. We **don't have liability insurance**.
35. We **lost the code**.
36. We've **changed the file layouts**.
37. We **don't collect it that way**.
38. The **dog ate the password**