FINDING CENSUS DATA

STEP 1: USING SOCIAL EXPLORER

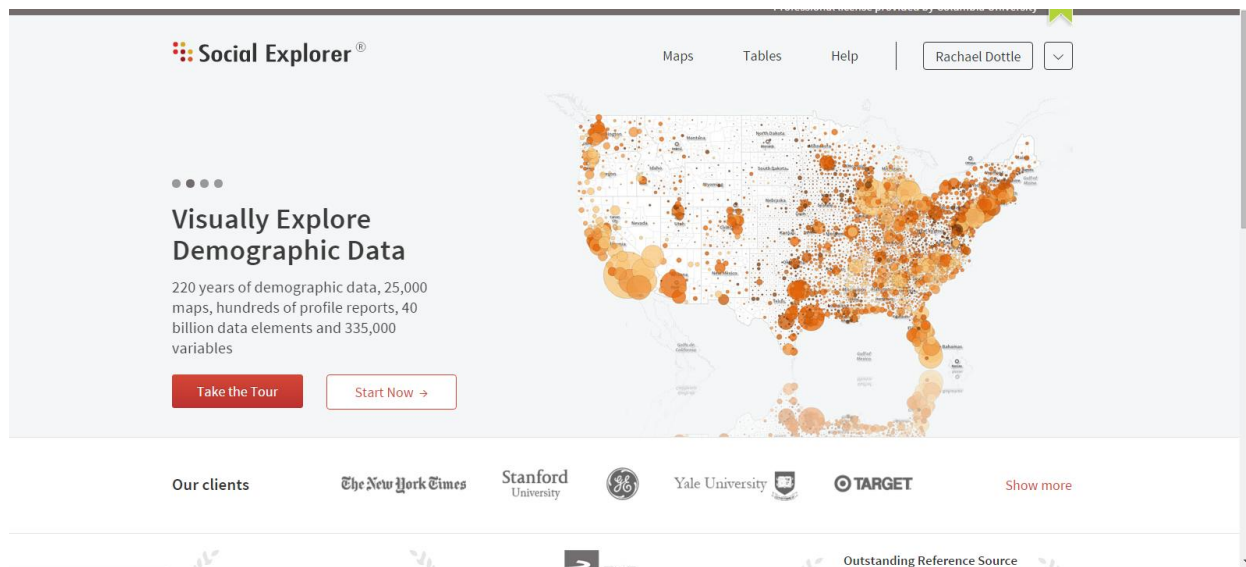**Open** a browser and navigate to the Social Explorer website: www.socialexplorer.com
To use Social Explorer, you will first need to create an account (Columbia subscribes to the website and students are able to access Social Explorer's data and maps for free using their Barnard or Columbia email address).
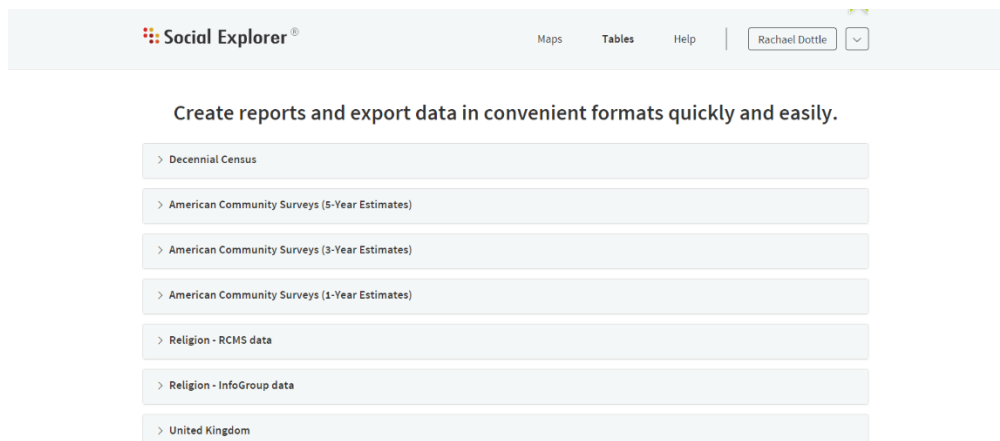
Once you have completed the account creation step, and have opened up the main page of Social Explorer within your signed-in account, notice the tabs available to you: "**Maps**," "**Tables**," or "**Help**".

Social Explorer allows you to easily map demographic data at different geographic units, through time, and with a variety of different economic and demographic variables. Social Explorer also allows you to download their Census datasets, to use for analysis and to map on your own.

For this guide, you will be using the "**Tables**" tab on the home page.

Clicking on the "**Tables**" tab will navigate you directly to a list of the various datasets available to download.

Choose the dataset of your specific interest. A dropdown menu will appear that prompts you to pick a specific year. On the right side of each dataset year are two options: "**Begin Report**" and "**Data Dictionary**". Choose "Begin Report".

You will now be prompted to choose the geographic units for your analysis. Some common geographic units of analysis for Census data include: Urban Area, County, or Census Tract. Once you choose a geographic unit, you will be prompted to specify the state in which you are looking, and if you narrow your search even further, the specific County or Census Tract too. You may specify specific units and once you have chosen, **Add** your selection to the Selection Box and click "**Proceed to Tables**".

From here you must choose the topics for your analysis. If you are doing exploratory work, feel free to add as many topics as you feel necessary, you can always remove them from your final dataset, and it is much easier than having to go through the entire selection process again.

If you aren't sure, you can also "**Search by Keyword**," or download a pre-prepared report using the "**Premade Report**" tab.

Click "**Next**". You will find a new page with download options and an abbreviated look at the data. You may download the data as an Excel file, which is ideal for any graphs you may end up doing, and includes percentages. To begin to get accustomed to working with data formatted for mapping, you should also choose the "**Data Download**" tab and download the data as a csv.

You will be asked to choose Output options. Select:

-Output column labels in the first row – will label the data using the data dictionary.
-Output all geographic identifiers – is useful for mapping
-Output percents – will give you percentages for your demographic data

Choose Download Data by geographic type. To do so, click on the linked data (CSV) which will download the set.

You should also download the data dictionary, which will be the last link under **Download programs to import and label data** (will be named Data Dictionary (text file))

Begin exploring both your Excel and CSV files!