



COMP9321 Data Services Engineering

Term1, 2025

Week 2: Exploring your Data in Pandas

Understanding the Data (ask the right Questions)

- What is this dataset?
- What should I expect within this dataset?
- Basic concepts (e.g., domain knowledge)
- What are the questions that I need to answer?
- Does the dataset have some sort of a schema? (utilize domain knowledge)

What are Pandas DataStructures

- **Series:** A Series is a one-dimensional array-like object containing a sequence of values and an associated array of data labels, called its *index*. The simplest Series is formed from only an array of data.

Example:

```
myseries = pd.Series([4, 7, -5, 3])
```

```
myseries
```

```
0    4
```

```
1    7
```

```
2   -5
```

```
3    3
```

```
dtype: int64
```

What are Pandas DataStructures

DataFrame: A DataFrame represents a rectangular table of data and contains an ordered collection of columns, each of which can be a different value type (numeric, string, boolean, etc.). The DataFrame has both a row and column index;

Example:

```
data = {'state': ['Ohio', 'Ohio', 'Ohio', 'Nevada', 'Nevada', 'Nevada'],  
       'year': [2000, 2001, 2002, 2001, 2002, 2003],  
       'pop': [1.5, 1.7, 3.6, 2.4, 2.9, 3.2]}  
frame = pd.DataFrame(data)
```

Understanding the Data using Python

- You can use the `describe()` function to get a summary about the data excluding the NaN values. This function returns the count, mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values and the quantiles of the data. Very Similar as well (`df.info()`)
- Use pandas `.shape` attribute to view the number of samples and features we're dealing with
- it's also a good idea to take a closer look at the data itself. With the help of the `head()` and `tail()` functions of the Pandas library, you can easily check out the first and last 5 lines of your DataFrame, respectively.
- Use pandas `.sample` attribute to view a random number of samples from the dataset
- Using (`df.dtypes`) to lists out the data types of each column in the dataframe

Understanding your Data

```
>>> df = pd.read_csv('MyLovelyDataset.csv')
```

```
>>> df.head()
```

#you can also use df.tail to get the last 5 rows

	Identifier	Type of Company	Location
0	206	NaN	Boston
1	216	Law	London; Virtue & Yorston
2	218	n/a	Sydney
3	472	Finance	London
4	480	Health	NY

Understanding your Data (Cont'd)

- If you have many columns and you want to understand what you have

```
>>> df = pd.read_csv('MyLovelyDataset.csv')
```

```
>>> list(df) # gets list of column names
```

```
['Identifier', 'Type of Company', 'Location']
```

Useful Resource

- Book: Python for Data Analysis, Second Edition, Wes McKinney
- <https://towardsdatascience.com/top-one-liners-in-pandas-for-effective-exploratory-data-analysis-a739b1c9de5>