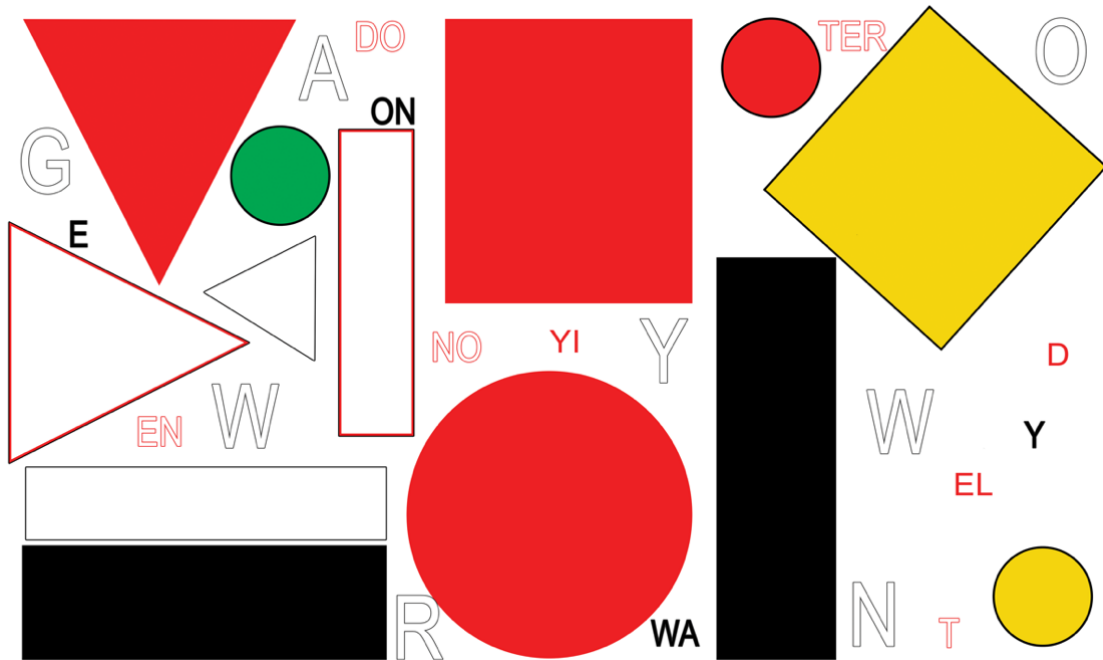


W01 – Data to Decisions

CASE STUDY: A look at how raw data becomes useful information.

What comes to mind when you see these shapes and letters? (Don't look at the next page yet).



When you think you have an idea scroll down to the next page.

Did you think of road signs? You are right. Here are the same shapes and letters but organized logically into something much more immediately recognizable.



In your reading this week you will learn about data, information, knowledge and decisions. The first image you saw could represent raw data that doesn't really have a context yet. Once that data has context and you see it as road signs it becomes useful information for you. The purpose of databases is to take data and give it context in order for it to become useful information. Once there is good, useful information from your database, people in the business can use that information combined with the experiences and education they possess to make decisions for their business to help it succeed.

If I was not from the United States, would I recognize those road signs? Maybe not. Same with information. People without a background in that information may not be as equipped to use the information for knowledge.

Also, even if you do recognize the road signs just fine and you have a good knowledge of what they mean, does that mean people always make the right decisions with that knowledge? No they don't, that's why we have car wrecks. So even with good knowledge, businesses don't always make the best decisions.

But the idea is to take lots of good data and put it into a database where we can take the data and get good information from it. Then knowledge and good decisions can follow.