

1. The oldest business in the world



Image: St. Peter Stiftskeller, founded 803. Credit: [Pakeha](#).

An important part of business is planning for the future and ensuring that the company survives changing market conditions. Some businesses do this really well and last for hundreds of years.

BusinessFinancing.co.uk [researched](#) the oldest company that is still in business in (almost) every country and compiled the results into a dataset. In this project, you'll explore that dataset to see what they found.

The database contains three tables.

categories

column	type	meaning
category_code	varchar	Code for the category of the business.
category	varchar	Description of the business category.

countries

column	type	meaning
country_code	varchar	ISO 3166-1 3-letter country code.
country	varchar	Name of the country.
continent	varchar	Name of the continent that the country exists in.

businesses

column	type	meaning
business	varchar	Name of the business.
year Founded	int	Year the business was founded.
category_code	varchar	Code for the category of the business.
country_code	char	ISO 3166-1 3-letter country code.

Let's begin by looking at the range of the founding years throughout the world.

In [119...]

```
%%sql
postgresql:///oldestbusinesses

-- Select the oldest and newest founding years from the businesses table
SELECT MIN(year Founded), MAX(year Founded) FROM businesses;
```

1 rows affected.

Out[119...]

min max

578 1999

2. How many businesses were founded before 1000?

Wow! That's a lot of variation between countries. In one country, the oldest business was only founded in 1999. By contrast, the oldest business in the world was founded back in 578. That's pretty incredible that a business has survived for more than a millennium.

I wonder how many other businesses there are like that.

In [119...]

%%sql

```
-- Get the count of rows in businesses where the founding year was before 1000
SELECT COUNT(year_founded) FROM businesses WHERE year_founded < 1000;
```

```
* postgresql:///oldestbusinesses
1 rows affected.
```

Out[119... **count**

6

3. Which businesses were founded before 1000?

Having a count is all very well, but I'd like more detail. Which businesses have been around for more than a millennium?

In [119...]

%%sql

```
-- Select all columns from businesses where the founding year was before 1000
-- Arrange the results from oldest to newest
SELECT * FROM businesses WHERE year_founded < 1000
ORDER BY year_founded ASC;
```

```
* postgresql:///oldestbusinesses
6 rows affected.
```

Out[119...]

	business	year_founded	category_code	country_code
	Kongō Gumi	578	CAT6	JPN
	St. Peter Stifts Kulinarium	803	CAT4	AUT
	Staffelter Hof Winery	862	CAT9	DEU
	Monnaie de Paris	864	CAT12	FRA
	The Royal Mint	886	CAT12	GBR
	Sean's Bar	900	CAT4	IRL

4. Exploring the categories

Now we know that the oldest, continuously operating company in the world is called Kongō Gumi. But what does that company do? The category codes in the `businesses` table aren't very helpful: the descriptions of the categories are stored in the `categories` table.

This is a common problem: for data storage, it's better to keep different types of data in different tables, but for analysis, you want all the data in one place. To solve this, you'll have to join the two tables together.

In [119...]

%%sql

```
-- Select business name, founding year, and country code from businesses; and category
-- where the founding year was before 1000, arranged from oldest to newest
SELECT b.business, b.year_founded, b.country_code, c.category FROM businesses b
RIGHT JOIN categories c
```

```
ON b.category_code = c.category_code
WHERE b.year_founded < 1000
ORDER BY year_founded ASC;
```

* postgresql:///oldestbusinesses
6 rows affected.

Out[119...]

business	year_founded	country_code	category
Kongō Gumi	578	JPN	Construction
St. Peter Stifts Kulinarium	803	AUT	Cafés, Restaurants & Bars
Staffelter Hof Winery	862	DEU	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries
Monnaie de Paris	864	FRA	Manufacturing & Production
The Royal Mint	886	GBR	Manufacturing & Production
Sean's Bar	900	IRL	Cafés, Restaurants & Bars

5. Counting the categories

With that extra detail about the oldest businesses, we can see that Kongō Gumi is a construction company. In that list of six businesses, we also see a café, a winery, and a bar. The two companies recorded as "Manufacturing and Production" are both mints. That is, they produce currency.

I'm curious as to what other industries constitute the oldest companies around the world, and which industries are most common.

In [120...]

```
%%sql
-- Select the category and count of category (as "n")
-- arranged by descending count, Limited to 10 most common categories
SELECT c.category, COUNT(c.category) AS n
FROM businesses AS b
INNER JOIN categories AS c
    ON b.category_code = c.category_code
GROUP BY c.category
ORDER BY n DESC
LIMIT 10;
```

* postgresql:///oldestbusinesses
10 rows affected.

Out[120...]

category	n
Banking & Finance	37
Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	22
Aviation & Transport	19
Postal Service	16
Manufacturing & Production	15
Media	7
Agriculture	6

Cafés, Restaurants & Bars	6
Food & Beverages	6
Tourism & Hotels	4

6. Oldest business by continent

It looks like "Banking & Finance" is the most popular category. Maybe that's where you should aim if you want to start a thousand-year business.

One thing we haven't looked at yet is where in the world these really old businesses are. To answer these questions, we'll need to join the `businesses` table to the `countries` table. Let's start by asking how old the oldest business is on each continent.

In [120...]

```
%%sql
-- Select the oldest founding year (as "oldest") from businesses,
-- and continent from countries
-- for each continent, ordered from oldest to newest
SELECT MIN(year_founded) AS oldest, d.continent
FROM businesses b
INNER JOIN countries d
ON b.country_code = d.country_code
GROUP BY CONTINENT
ORDER BY oldest ASC;
```

* postgresql:///oldestbusinesses
6 rows affected.

Out[120...]

oldest	continent
578	Asia
803	Europe
1534	North America
1565	South America
1772	Africa
1809	Oceania

7. Joining everything for further analysis

Interesting. There's a jump in time from the older businesses in Asia and Europe to the 16th Century oldest businesses in North and South America, then to the 18th and 19th Century oldest businesses in Africa and Oceania.

As mentioned earlier, when analyzing data it's often really helpful to have all the tables you want access to joined together into a single set of results that can be analyzed further. Here, that means we need to join all three tables.

In [120...]

```
%%sql
```

```
-- Select the business, founding year, category, country, and continent
SELECT b.business, b.year Founded, c.category, d.country, d.continent
FROM businesses b
INNER JOIN categories c
ON b.category_code = c.category_code
INNER JOIN countries d
ON b.country_code = d.country_code;
```

```
* postgresql:///oldestbusinesses
163 rows affected.
```

Out[120...]	business	year_founded	category	country	continent
	Spinzar Cotton Company	1930	Agriculture	Afghanistan	Asia
	ALBtelecom	1912	Telecommunications	Albania	Europe
	Andbank	1930	Banking & Finance	Andorra	Europe
	Liwa Chemicals	1939	Manufacturing & Production	United Arab Emirates	Asia
	Bank of the Province of Buenos Aires	1822	Banking & Finance	Argentina	South America
	Yerevan Ararat Brandy-Wine-Vodka Factory	1877	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Armenia	Asia
	Australia Post	1809	Postal Service	Australia	Oceania
	St. Peter Stifts Kulinarium	803	Cafés, Restaurants & Bars	Austria	Europe
	Azerbaijan Caspian Shipping Company	1858	Aviation & Transport	Azerbaijan	Asia
	Brarudi	1955	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Burundi	Africa
	Affligem Brewery	1074	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Belgium	Europe
	Communauté Électrique du Bénin	1968	Energy	Benin	Africa
	Air Burkina	1967	Aviation & Transport	Burkina Faso	Africa
	M. M. Ispahani Limited	1820	Food & Beverages	Bangladesh	Asia
	Arsenal AD	1878	Defense	Bulgaria	Europe
	BMMI	1883	Retail	Bahrain	Asia
	Sarajevska Pivara	1864	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Europe
	Olivaria Brewery	1864	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Belarus	Europe
	Belize Bank	1902	Banking & Finance	Belize	North America
	Banco Nacional de Bolivia	1871	Banking & Finance	Bolivia, Plurinational State of	South America

Casa da Moeda do Brasil	1694	Manufacturing & Production	Brazil	South America
Mount Gay Rum	1703	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Barbados	North America
Hua Ho Department Store	1947	Retail	Brunei Darussalam	Asia
Tashi Group	1959	Aviation & Transport	Bhutan	Asia
Botswana Meat Commission	1965	Agriculture	Botswana	Africa
Banque Internationale pour la Centrafricaine	1946	Banking & Finance	Central African Republic	Africa
Hudson's Bay Company	1670	Retail	Canada	North America
Gasthof Sternen	1230	Tourism & Hotels	Switzerland	Europe
Famae	1811	Defense	Chile	South America
Ma Yu Ching's Bucket Chicken House	1153	Cafés, Restaurants & Bars	China	Asia
La Poste	1945	Postal Service	Côte d'Ivoire	Africa
Cameroon Development Corporation	1947	Agriculture	Cameroon	Africa
Société nationale des Chemins de fer du Congo	1889	Aviation & Transport	Congo, The Democratic Republic of the	Africa
Development Bank of the Central African States	1975	Banking & Finance	Congo	Africa
Casa de Moneda de Colombia	1621	Manufacturing & Production	Colombia	South America
Central Bank of the Comoros	1981	Banking & Finance	Comoros	Africa
Correios de Cabo Verde	1849	Postal Service	Cabo Verde	Africa
Florida Ice and Farm Company	1908	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Costa Rica	North America
Cubana de Aviación	1929	Aviation & Transport	Cuba	North America
Bank of Cyprus	1899	Banking & Finance	Cyprus	Europe
Pivovar Broumov	1348	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Czechia	Europe
Staffelter Hof Winery	862	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Germany	Europe
Ethio-Djibouti Railways	1901	Aviation & Transport	Djibouti	Africa
The Chronicle (Dominica)	1909	Media	Dominica	North America
Munke Mølle	1135	Manufacturing & Production	Denmark	Europe

Hamoud Boualem	1878	Food & Beverages	Algeria	Africa
Egyptian National Railways	1854	Aviation & Transport	Egypt	Africa
Asmara Brewery	1939	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Eritrea	Africa
Casa de Ganaderos	1218	Agriculture	Spain	Europe
Raeapteek	1422	Medical	Estonia	Europe
National Bank of Ethiopia	1906	Banking & Finance	Ethiopia	Africa
Fiskars	1649	Consumer Goods	Finland	Europe
Monnaie de Paris	864	Manufacturing & Production	France	Europe
BGFIBank Group	1971	Banking & Finance	Gabon	Africa
The Royal Mint	886	Manufacturing & Production	United Kingdom	Europe
Bank of Georgia	1903	Banking & Finance	Georgia	Asia
Halco Mining	1962	Mining	Guinea	Africa
Correios da Guiné-Bissau	1973	Postal Service	Guinea-Bissau	Africa
Guinea Ecuatorial Airlines	1996	Aviation & Transport	Equatorial Guinea	Africa
Piraeus Bank	1606	Banking & Finance	Greece	Europe
Corporación Multi Inversiones	1920	Food & Beverages	Guatemala	North America
Banks DIH	1840	Food & Beverages	Guyana	South America
National Railroad of Honduras	1870	Aviation & Transport	Honduras	North America
Kraljevica Shipyard	1729	Manufacturing & Production	Croatia	Europe
Rhum Barbancourt	1862	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Haiti	North America
Zwack	1790	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Hungary	Europe
Pindad	1808	Defense	Indonesia	Asia
Wadia Group	1736	Manufacturing & Production	India	Asia
Sean's Bar	900	Cafés, Restaurants & Bars	Ireland	Europe
North Oil Company	1928	Energy	Iraq	Asia
Íslandspóstur	1776	Postal Service	Iceland	Europe
Café Abu Salem	1914	Cafés, Restaurants & Bars	Israel	Asia

Marinelli Bell Foundry	1040	Manufacturing & Production	Italy	Europe
Rose Hall	1770	Tourism & Hotels	Jamaica	North America
Arab Bank	1930	Banking & Finance	Jordan	Asia
Kongō Gumi	578	Construction	Japan	Asia
Bogatyr Access Komir	1913	Mining	Kazakhstan	Asia
KCB Group Limited	1896	Banking & Finance	Kenya	Africa
National Bank of Cambodia	1954	Banking & Finance	Cambodia	Asia
KT Corporation	1885	Telecommunications	Korea, Republic of	Asia
M.H. Alshaya Co.	1890	Retail	Kuwait	Asia
Electricite du Laos	1959	Energy	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Asia
Bank Audi	1830	Banking & Finance	Lebanon	Asia
National Port Authority	1921	Aviation & Transport	Liberia	Africa
Umma Bank	1907	Banking & Finance	Libya	Africa
1st National Bank of St Lucia	1938	Banking & Finance	Saint Lucia	North America
National Bank of Liechtenstein	1861	Banking & Finance	Liechtenstein	Europe
George Steuart Group	1835	Food & Beverages	Sri Lanka	Asia
Central Bank of Lesotho	1978	Banking & Finance	Lesotho	Africa
Gubernija	1665	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Lithuania	Europe
Mousel	1511	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Luxembourg	Europe
Cēsu Alus	1590	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Latvia	Europe
Attijariwafa Bank	1904	Banking & Finance	Morocco	Africa
Air Madagascar	1962	Aviation & Transport	Madagascar	Africa
La Casa de Moneda de México	1534	Manufacturing & Production	Mexico	North America
Tutunski kombinat Prilep	1873	Consumer Goods	North Macedonia	Europe
Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision du Mali	1957	Media	Mali	Africa
HSBC Bank Malta	1882	Banking & Finance	Malta	Europe
Myanmar National Airlines	1948	Aviation & Transport	Myanmar	Asia
Pošta Crne Gore	1841	Postal Service	Montenegro	Europe

Mongolian National Broadcaster	1931	Media	Mongolia	Asia
Beira Railroad Corporation	1892	Aviation & Transport	Mozambique	Africa
Central Bank of Mauritania	1973	Banking & Finance	Mauritania	Africa
Mauritius Post	1772	Postal Service	Mauritius	Africa
Malawi Broadcasting Corporation	1964	Media	Malawi	Africa
Pos Malaysia	1800	Postal Service	Malaysia	Asia
NamPost	1814	Postal Service	Namibia	Africa
Office of Radio and Television of Niger	1960	Media	Niger	Africa
First Bank of Nigeria	1894	Banking & Finance	Nigeria	Africa
Flor de Caña	1890	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Nicaragua	North America
The Brand Brewery	1340	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Netherlands	Europe
Posten Norge	1647	Postal Service	Norway	Europe
Nepal Bank Limited	1937	Banking & Finance	Nepal	Asia
Bank of New Zealand	1861	Banking & Finance	New Zealand	Oceania
Petroleum Development Oman	1937	Energy	Oman	Asia
House of Habib	1841	Conglomerate	Pakistan	Asia
National Bank of Panama	1904	Banking & Finance	Panama	North America
Casa Nacional de Moneda	1565	Banking & Finance	Peru	South America
Destileria Limtuaco	1853	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Philippines	Asia
Bochnia Salt Mine	1248	Mining	Poland	Europe
Kim Chong-t'ae Electric Locomotive Works	1945	Aviation & Transport	Korea, Democratic People's Republic of	Asia
CTT-Correios de Portugal SA	1520	Postal Service	Portugal	Europe
Salam International Investment Limited	1952	Conglomerate	Qatar	Asia
Ursus Breweries	1878	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Romania	Europe
Petrodvorets Watch Factory	1721	Consumer Goods	Russian Federation	Europe
National Post Office	1922	Postal Service	Rwanda	Africa
House of Alireza	1845	Construction	Saudi Arabia	Asia
Bank of Khartoum	1913	Banking & Finance	Sudan	Africa
Dakar–Niger Railway	1924	Aviation &	Senegal	Africa

			Transport		
Singapore Post	1819	Postal Service		Singapore	Asia
Rokel Commercial Bank	1917	Banking & Finance		Sierra Leone	Africa
HSBC El Salvador	1891	Banking & Finance		El Salvador	North America
Radio Mogadishu	1943	Media		Somalia	Africa
Apatin Brewery	1756	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries		Serbia	Europe
Ivory Bank	1994	Banking & Finance		South Sudan	Africa
Central Bank of São Tomé and Príncipe	1975	Banking & Finance	Sao Tome and Principe		Africa
Kremnica Mint	1328	Manufacturing & Production		Slovakia	Europe
Gostilna Gastuž	1467	Tourism & Hotels		Slovenia	Europe
Skyllbergs bruk	1346	Manufacturing & Production		Sweden	Europe
Swazi Rail	1963	Aviation & Transport		Eswatini	Africa
Air Seychelles	1977	Aviation & Transport		Seychelles	Asia
Bakdash	1885	Cafés, Restaurants & Bars		Syrian Arab Republic	Asia
Cotontchad	1971	Agriculture		Chad	Africa
La Poste du Togo	1883	Postal Service		Togo	Africa
B.Grimm Group	1878	Conglomerate		Thailand	Asia
House of Angostura	1830	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Trinidad and Tobago		North America
La Poste Tunisienne	1847	Postal Service		Tunisia	Africa
Çemberlitaş Hamamı	1584	Tourism & Hotels		Turkey	Asia
Bank of Taiwan	1897	Banking & Finance	Taiwan, Province of China		Asia
Tanzania Breweries Limited	1933	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	Tanzania, United Republic of		Africa
Stanbic Bank Uganda Limited	1906	Banking & Finance		Uganda	Africa
Drohobych salt plant	1250	Manufacturing & Production		Ukraine	Europe
Cafe Brasilero	1877	Cafés, Restaurants & Bars		Uruguay	South America
Shirley Plantation	1638	Agriculture	United States		North America
Tashkent Aviation Production Association	1932	Manufacturing & Production	Uzbekistan		Asia

			notebook		
Hacienda Chuao	1660	Food & Beverages	Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of	South America	
Vietnam Railways	1881	Aviation & Transport	Viet Nam	Asia	
European Trust Company	1991	Banking & Finance	Vanuatu	Oceania	
Yemenia Airways	1962	Aviation & Transport	Yemen	Asia	
Premier FMCG	1820	Manufacturing & Production	South Africa	Africa	
ZamPost	1896	Postal Service	Zambia	Africa	
Standard Chartered Zimbabwe	1892	Banking & Finance	Zimbabwe	Africa	
Meridian Corporation	1999	Media	Kosovo	Europe	

8. Counting categories by continent

Having businesses joined to categories and countries together means we can ask questions about both these things together. For example, which are the most common categories for the oldest businesses on each continent?

In [120...]

```
%%sql
-- Count the number of businesses in each continent and category
SELECT d.continent, c.category, COUNT(b.business) AS n
FROM businesses b
INNER JOIN categories c
ON b.category_code = c.category_code
INNER JOIN countries d
ON b.country_code = d.country_code
GROUP BY d.continent, c.category
ORDER BY n DESC;
```

* postgresql://oldestbusinesses
56 rows affected.

Out[120...]

continent	category	n
Africa	Banking & Finance	17
Europe	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	12
Africa	Aviation & Transport	10
Africa	Postal Service	9
Europe	Manufacturing & Production	8
Asia	Aviation & Transport	7
Asia	Banking & Finance	6
North America	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	5
Europe	Banking & Finance	5
Europe	Postal Service	4

Africa	Media	4
North America	Banking & Finance	4
Europe	Consumer Goods	3
Asia	Conglomerate	3
Asia	Manufacturing & Production	3
Asia	Cafés, Restaurants & Bars	3
Africa	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	3
South America	Banking & Finance	3
Africa	Agriculture	3
Asia	Retail	3
Asia	Energy	3
Asia	Food & Beverages	2
South America	Food & Beverages	2
Europe	Tourism & Hotels	2
North America	Aviation & Transport	2
Asia	Distillers, Vintners, & Breweries	2
Oceania	Banking & Finance	2
Asia	Construction	2
South America	Manufacturing & Production	2
Europe	Cafés, Restaurants & Bars	2
Asia	Postal Service	2
North America	Tourism & Hotels	1
Europe	Media	1
Asia	Agriculture	1
South America	Defense	1
Africa	Energy	1
Europe	Mining	1
North America	Media	1
Europe	Agriculture	1
Asia	Mining	1
Africa	Food & Beverages	1
Asia	Telecommunications	1
North America	Food & Beverages	1
Africa	Manufacturing & Production	1
Asia	Defense	1

North America	Agriculture	1
Asia	Tourism & Hotels	1
Europe	Defense	1
Europe	Medical	1
Europe	Telecommunications	1
Asia	Media	1
South America	Cafés, Restaurants & Bars	1
North America	Retail	1
Oceania	Postal Service	1
Africa	Mining	1
North America	Manufacturing & Production	1

9. Filtering counts by continent and category

Combining continent and business category led to a lot of results. It's difficult to see what is important. To trim this down to a manageable size, let's restrict the results to only continent/category pairs with a high count.

In [120...]

```
%%sql
-- Repeat that previous query, filtering for results having a count greater than 5
SELECT d.continent, c.category, COUNT(b.business) AS n
FROM businesses b
INNER JOIN categories c
ON b.category_code = c.category_code
INNER JOIN countries d
ON b.country_code = d.country_code
GROUP BY d.continent, c.category
ORDER BY n DESC;
```

* postgresql://oldestbusinesses
(psycopg2.errors.SyntaxError) syntax error at or near "INNER"
LINE 5: INNER JOIN categories c
^

[SQL: -- Repeat that previous query, filtering for results having a count greater than 5
SELECT d.continent, c.category, COUNT(b.business) AS n
FROM businesses b
WHERE n > 5
INNER JOIN categories c
ON b.category_code = c.category_code
INNER JOIN countries d
ON b.country_code = d.country_code
GROUP BY d.continent, c.category
ORDER BY n DESC;]
(Background on this error at: <http://sqlalche.me/e/13/f405>)