

DATA MANAGEMENT AND INTRODUCTION TO STATA

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INTRODUCTIONS AND PREAMBLE

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- Used Stata for 6(-ish) years ... still learning!

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- Senior Lecturer in Economics
- Used Stata for

WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR?

Targeted at anyone who has **no to little** experience using Stata

Primarily for those engaging in **quantitative** research (MRes/PhD)

What to learn to use a statistical package that allows for both use of **point-and-click GUI** and **Stata's Markup and Control Language (SMCL)**

WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR?

For those who want to:

- **Organise and manage data**
 - Generating, keeping and dropping, reshaping
- **Visualise data**
 - Scatter and line graphs
 - Histograms
- **Analyse data**
 - ANOVA
 - Regression analysis
- **Automate and reproduce workflow**
 - Log and do-files
 - Loops

WHAT IS STATA?

WHAT IS STATA?

Stata is a powerful statistical package with:

- smart data-management facilities
- a wide array of up-to-date statistical techniques
- an excellent system for producing publication-quality graphs

Available on a variety of operating systems (Windows, Mac OS and Linux distributions)

Also available in different varieties:

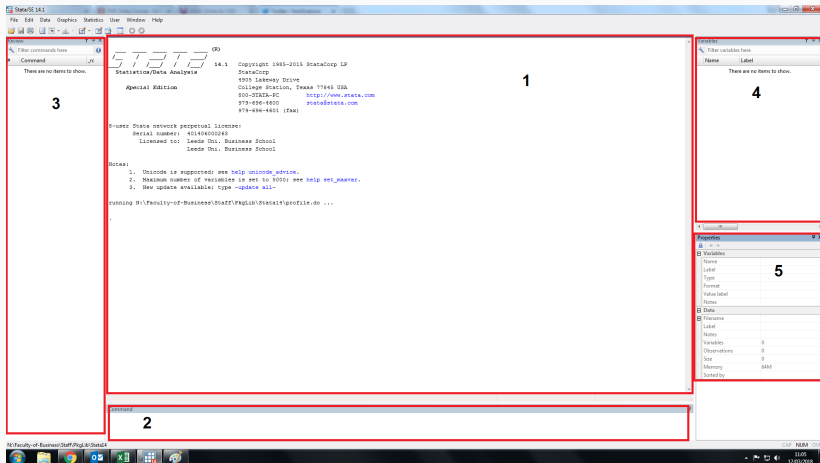
- IC (standard)
- SE (extended)
- MP (multiprocessing)

WHY NOT USE X?

There are alternative statistical software packages you can use (to name a few):

- R
- Matlab
- SAS
- SPSS
- Gauss
- Gretl
- Eviews

STATA 14 FRONT END GRAPHIC USER INTERFACE (GUI)



Stata has an menu bar on the top and 5 internal windows.

The **main** window is the one in the middle (1 on the previous slide). It gives you all the output of your operations in Stata.

The **command window** (2) executes commands.

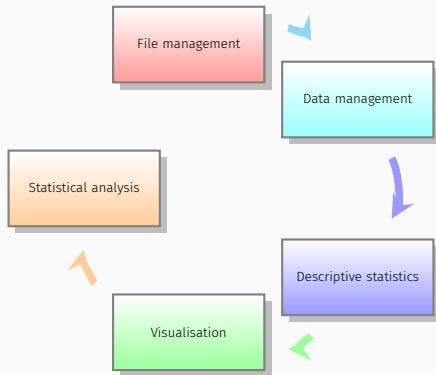
- You can type commands directly in this window as an alternative to using the menu system.
- Stata will show you what the written command is for each action performed using the drop-down menus.

The **review window** (3), lists all the operations preformed since opening Stata. If you click on one of your past commands, you will see the command being displayed in the Command window and you can re-run it by hitting the enter key.

The **variables window** (4) lists the variables in the current dataset (and their descriptions). When you double-click on the variable, it appears in the Command window.

The **properties window** (5) gives information about your dataset and your variables.

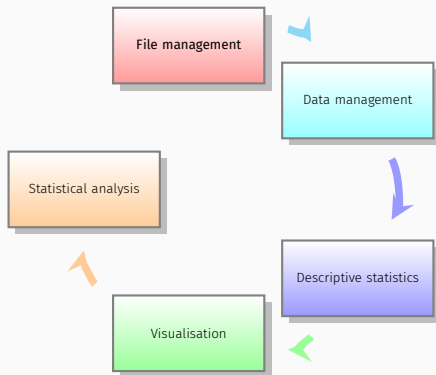
STATA WORKFLOW



- File management
 - Data management
 - Descriptive statistics
 - Visualisation
 - Statistical analysis
- } These two stages will consume the **most time** in any research project

FILE MANAGEMENT

STATA WORKFLOW: FILE MANAGEMENT



- This is often an aspect of using Stata that is **wrongly** overlooked
- Usually a facet that people return to after learning the syntax
- As researchers, **one of our primary objectives**:

Replicability and reliability

- If, after testing your research hypothesis, using data, you discover some results of interest, **what use is this if they cannot be reproduced by others?**
- Hence, engraining good practices from the beginning, **promotes higher-quality research** in future work

- What do we mean by **file management**?
 - Typically, when people (**most**) begin using Stata, they will just open some data and **do stuff**
- Questions that arise:
 - Where is the data stored?
 - Where is the output stored?
 - Where is Stata currently working from?
 - Are we utilising one or many directories?
- File management is knowing the answer to these questions constantly and having a good justification for their placement

Where is Stata currently working from?

- **Definition:** working directory
 - The (**current**) working directory is the file within the computer's hierarchical file structure that a program is working from
- That is to say, anything you ask Stata to open or to save will be accessed or stored in this working directory

Where is Stata currently working from?

- There are two ways of finding out what the current working directory is in Stata:
 - Look at the bottom-left hand corner of Stata



- Type the command **pwd** into the command window in Stata

```
. pwd  
/Users/David/Downloads
```

- Both are telling us that we are working out of the **Downloads** folder

- On the University system, this usually is set as a default to the personal drive (M:/)
- In either case, **is it a good idea to work out of an indiscriminate folder?**
 - **Almost always, no!**
 - Why? → There will be unrelated files that will make it complex to keep track of related files and output

So, we have two options what we can proceed with that adhere to **good practice**:

- **Change** to a directory that already exists
- **Create** a directory to work from

- If the folder that you want to work from **already exists**, we can tell Stata to change the working directory to this folder.
- For example, imagine I have a folder called **Thesis_Paper_One** and here is the path (note, this was the file path on my Mac, it will look slightly different on Windows PCs):

Users → David → Documents → Projects → Thesis_Paper_One

- This can be done in two ways:
 - Using the drop down menus in the GUI
 - Using the **cwd** command directly

Using the drop down menus in the GUI

- If you follow this menu path:

File → Change working directory...

- Stata will then open a **file explorer window** where you can navigate to, and choose, the folder you wish to set as the current working directory
- This is a useful method if **you do not have the exact file path to hand**
- Notice, Stata will then print the exact file path in the output window after changing working directory successfully.

Using the drop down menus in the GUI

- If you already happen to know the file path to the directory, we can type the change directory command directly into the command prompt:

```
cd "/Users/David/Documents/Projects/Thesis_Paper_One"
```

Breakdown

- cd
Tells Stata to **change directory**
- **"/Users/David/Documents/Projects/Thesis_Paper_One"**
Provides Stata with the file path to the directory that you will want to change to

FILE MANAGEMENT: CREATING A DIRECTORY

- Perhaps you want to create the folder, as part of a new project, which we'll call **Thesis_Paper_Two**
- Here, we can only use the command prompt, by typing the following command

```
mkdir "/Users/David/Documents/Projects/Thesis_Paper_Two"
```

Breakdown

- `mkdir`

Tells Stata to **create a new folder in this directory**

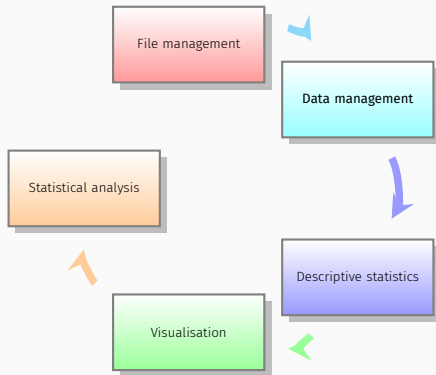
- `"/Users/David/Documents/Projects/Thesis_Paper_Two"`

Provides Stata with the file path to the directory that you will want to move to (**Projects**) and create a folder in there called **Thesis_Paper_Two**

DEMO: CHANGING AND CREATING DIRECTORIES

DATA MANAGEMENT

STATA WORKFLOW: DATA MANAGEMENT



- As stated previously, the data management aspect of the workflow is arguably **one of the most important (and time-consuming) stages of a research project**
- **Why?**
 - Data **might not be native to Stata**, so it must be imported correctly
 - Datasets, particularly survey data, may have some **errors in their reporting and may require our attention**
 - You may want to gather data from different datasets and **consolidate them into one master dataset**
 - Perhaps you want to **create new variables** based on the original data
- Taking the time to carry out this stage properly will **save you time in the long run**

We can characterise datasets into two broad sets:

- **Stata datafiles** (.dta files)
 - This is the file type that Stata can read and work with **natively**; as such it requires little work to open
- **All other types of datafile**
 - This is a huge set but these have to be imported as a **foreign** datafile
 - While the list is endless, we will focus only on:
 - CSV
 - XLS
 - XLSX
- If there are other datasets from particular programs you'd like to import, consider the program **StatTransfer** - **not free**

DATA MANAGEMENT: A QUICK ASIDE

Before we go ahead and learn to import and open different datafile types into Stata, **we need to make sure we're working on a blank canvas**, so to speak. If we don't do this beforehand:

1. Stata will **refuse** to open other data as it will risk losing data that is already in memory
2. It may, in theory, **corrupt** the imported data and/or the data in current memory

So to avoid the risk of either of the two above outcomes, **we type in the following command into Stata before importing anything:**

```
clear all
```

This will **clear literally everything from Stata's working memory**, including, most importantly, any open datafiles

Stata datafiles (.dta files)

- As previously stated, these are native to Stata and so are very easily open and read by Stata
- **Assuming that the datafile is stored in the current working directory**, use the following drop down menu path:

File → Open

- Once you've done this, you can navigate to the datafile and then double-click to open
- An easy way to verify the data is now loaded into Stata is to check the **variables window**
- If you see variables names in there, **you've successfully opened your Stata datafile**

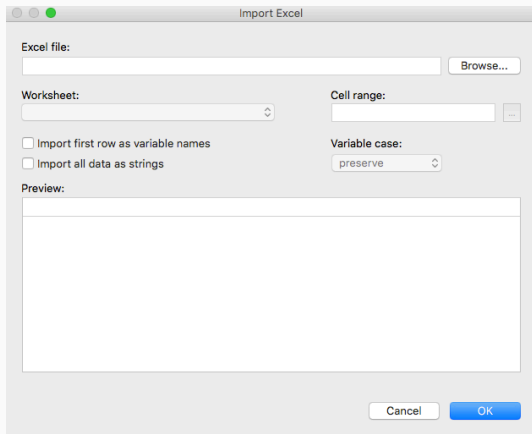
Excel datafiles (.xls/x files)

- Despite secondary data being provided in a .dta format more frequently - **it is more common for the data to be provided as an Excel file** (either .xls or .xlsx file types)
- This is not quite as straightforward as opening a .dta file but it is luckily not too complex an operation
- **Assuming that the datafile is stored in the current working directory**, use the following drop down menu path:

File → Import → Excel Spreadsheet (*.xls;*.xlsx)

DATA MANAGEMENT: IMPORTING XLS/X DATAFILES

After following the drop-down path, you'll be presented with the following window:



Complete the following steps to import the datafile:

1. Direct Stata to the datafile by selecting **Browse..**
2. Choose the worksheet that your data is in within the workbook
3. Typically, the heading of each column of the spreadsheet will contain the variable name. Select the option, **Import first row as variable names**
4. In the preview pane at the bottom of the window, you can confirm here that the data is being imported correctly
5. Finally, press OK and Stata should have then successfully imported the Excel datafile

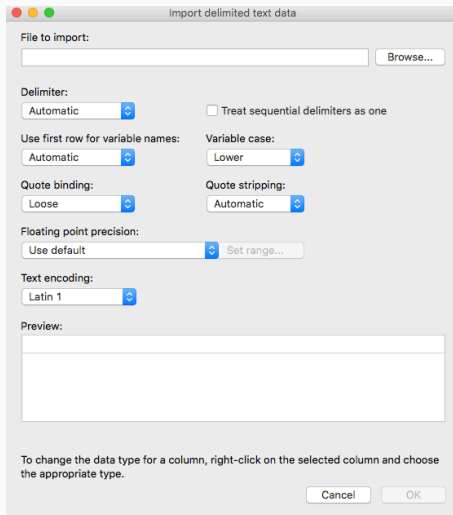
Comma-Separate Values datafiles (.csv files)

- Other than Excel datafile types, another popular datafile format is the comma-separate values (CSV) datafiles
- They're popular as they **do not require proprietary software to open or edit**
- **Assuming that the datafile is stored in the current working directory**, use the following drop down menu path:

File → Import → Text data (delimited;*.csv)

DATA MANAGEMENT: IMPORTING CSV DATAFILES

After following the drop-down path, you'll be presented with the following window:



The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Import delimited text data". It contains several configuration options for importing a file:

- File to import:** A text input field with a "Browse..." button to its right.
- Delimiter:** A dropdown menu set to "Automatic". To its right is a checkbox labeled "Treat sequential delimiters as one" which is currently unchecked.
- Use first row for variable names:** A dropdown menu set to "Automatic".
- Variable case:** A dropdown menu set to "Lower".
- Quote binding:** A dropdown menu set to "Loose".
- Quote stripping:** A dropdown menu set to "Automatic".
- Floating point precision:** A dropdown menu set to "Use default" with a "Set range..." button to its right.
- Text encoding:** A dropdown menu set to "Latin 1".
- Preview:** A large empty text area for previewing the data.

At the bottom of the dialog, there is a note: "To change the data type for a column, right-click on the selected column and choose the appropriate type." Below this note are "Cancel" and "OK" buttons.

Complete the following steps to import the datafile:

1. Direct Stata to the datafile by selecting **Browse..**
2. Choose the delimiter (the symbol that Stata recognises as separating individual data observations) - automatic is usually best
3. Just in the case with XLS/X files, if the first row represents the variable names, choose always under the appropriate option
4. Observe the preview and if everything looks in its proper format, press OK

DEMO: IMPORTING DATAFILES

BROWSING AND MANIPULATING DATA

So, regardless of how your data had been stored originally, **you should be aware** of how to import the datafile into Stata

Now what?

This is where we get started with Stata!

What might you want to do immediately after importing data?

1. Browse the data
2. Edit the data
3. Generate new variables

Keep in mind, before we've imported and formatted the data correctly, **we should not be embarking on any type of statistical analysis**

Despite the fact we saw a preview of the data when importing CSV/XLS datafiles, we don't really know how the data looks

Something we can do is **browse** the dataset by simply typing:

browse

When you do so, you should see the following window open on your screen...

BROWSING DATA

Data Editor (Browse) — auto.dta

Filter Variables Properties Snapshots

make[1] AMC Concord

	make	price	mpg	rep78	headroom	trunk	weight	length	turn
1	AMC Concord	4,699	22	3	2.5	11	2,930	186	
2	AMC Pacer	4,749	17	3	3.0	11	3,350	173	
3	AMC Spirit	3,799	22	.	3.0	12	2,640	168	
4	Buick Century	4,816	20	3	4.5	16	3,250	196	
5	Buick Electra	7,827	15	4	4.0	20	4,080	222	
6	Buick LeSabre	5,788	18	3	4.0	21	3,670	218	
7	Buick Opel	4,453	26	.	3.0	10	2,230	170	
8	Buick Regal	5,189	20	3	2.0	16	3,280	200	
9	Buick Riviera	10,372	16	3	3.5	17	3,880	207	
10	Buick Skylark	4,082	19	3	3.5	13	3,400	200	
11	Cad. Deville	11,385	14	3	4.0	20	4,330	221	
12	Cad. Eldorado	14,500	14	2	3.5	16	3,900	204	
13	Cad. Seville	15,906	21	3	3.0	13	4,290	204	
14	Chev. Chevette	3,299	29	3	2.5	9	2,110	163	
15	Chev. Impala	5,705	16	4	4.0	20	3,690	212	
16	Chev. Malibu	4,504	22	3	3.5	17	3,180	193	
17	Chev. Monte Carlo	5,104	22	2	2.0	16	3,220	200	
18	Chev. Monza	3,667	24	2	2.0	7	2,750	179	
19	Chev. Nova	3,955	19	3	3.5	13	3,430	197	
20	Dodge Colt	3,984	30	5	2.0	8	2,120	163	
21	Dodge Diplomat	4,010	18	2	4.0	17	3,600	206	
22	Dodge Magnum	5,886	16	2	4.0	17	3,600	206	
23	Dodge St. Regis	6,342	17	2	4.5	21	3,740	220	
24	Ford Fiesta	4,389	28	4	1.5	9	1,800	147	
25	Ford Mustang	4,187	21	3	2.0	10	2,650	179	
26	Linc. Continental	11,497	12	3	3.5	22	4,840	233	

Variables

Name	Label
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> make	Make and Model
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> price	Price
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> mpg	Mileage (mpg)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> rep78	Repair Record...
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> headroom	Headroom (in.)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> trunk	Trunk space (...)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> weight	Weight (lbs.)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> length	Length (in.)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> turn	Turn Circle (ft.)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> displacement	Displacement...
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> gear_ratio	Gear Ratio

Properties

Variables

Name	make
Label	Make and Model
Type	str18
Format	%-18s
Value label	
Notes	

Data

Filename	auto.dta
Label	1978 Automobile Data
Notes	1 note
Variables	12
Observations	74
Size	3.11K
Memory	64M
Sorted by	foreign

Vars: 12 Order: Dataset Obs: 74 Length: 18 Filter: Off

That's great but **what's going on in this huge window?**

1. Main window

- This is main data browser pane within the browse window
- Here, we can see all our **variables and the observations for each individual unit in the dataset** (notice some are in red? We'll come back to this)

2. Top-right corner

- This is the **variables pane**
- Here you can see each of the variables within the dataset as well as their label
- You can (un)tick them to filter the data in the browser pane

3. Bottom-right corner

- This is the **properties** pane
- It displays information about the selected variable - notably the **variable type**

In the last window, you've probably noticed that the observations for the variable **make** were all in **red**, whilst the others were just in **black** text

Any ideas why?

We could go into a **lot** of detail about this but simply put:

- When you see the observations of a variable in **red**, this signifies that the variable is of type **string** - that's to say the data is a word or contains text
- Otherwise, when the data is in black, this usually signifies that data is stored as a **numeric type** (e.g. **float**, **integer**, **double**)

When it comes to **manipulating/changing the data**, for whatever reason, there are a few ways of doing this:

1. Editing the data within the browser directly (**not recommended**)
 - **Why?** → piecemeal changes of the data doesn't speak to **replicability and reliability**
2. Using a suite of commands that allow you to change aspects of a variable (**recommended**) - these include:
 - **rename**
 - renaming variables
 - **keep**
 - keep a variable or observations in a range
 - **drop**
 - drop a variable or observations in a range
 - **generate**
 - create a new variable

Renaming variables:

Syntax

```
rename [oldname] [newname]
```

Example

```
rename year Year
```

Labelling variables:

Syntax

```
label variable [varname] "[label]"
```

Example

```
label variable Year "Year survey took place"
```

MANIPULATING DATA: KEEPING AND DROPPING VARIABLES

- The original dataset may contain variables you are **not interested in** or **observations you don't want to analyse**
- It's a good idea to get rid of these first - that way, they won't use up valuable memory and these data will not inadvertently be included into your statistical analysis
- This can be done using either:
 - keep
 - drop

Syntax (applies to drop also)

```
keep [varlist]
```

Example

```
keep id age year health
```


- The previous slide shows the most straightforward implementation of the **keep and drop** commands, however we can make these commands more complex by using what are called **relational** and **logical operators**
- This is a better alternative to piecemeal edits to the data, as **you can set particular conditions to which data is kept or dropped** given your own research ideals
- While you may not use all of them, the next slide lists all the available operators that **you can use with commands in Stata that have the option of setting a conditional**

RELATIONAL AND LOGICAL OPERATORS

Relational

- ==

equal to

- !=

not equal to

- >

greater than

- >=

greater than or equal to

- <

less than

- <=

less than or equal to

Logical

- &

and

-

| or

- ~

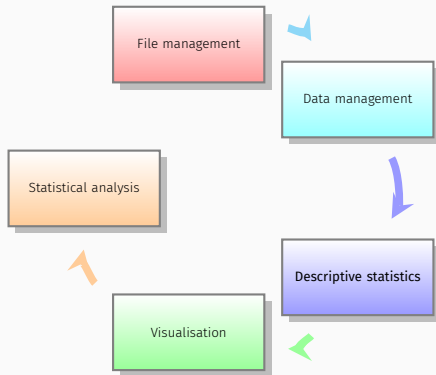
not

- !

not

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

STATA WORKFLOW: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS



CONCLUSION

QUESTIONS?