# Data formats in practice

When you think about the word "format," a lot of things might come to mind. Think of an advertisement for your favorite store. You might find it in the form of a print ad, a billboard, or even a commercial. The information is presented in the format that works best for you to take it in. The format of a dataset is a lot like that, and choosing the right format will help you manage and use your data in the best way possible.

## Data format examples

As with most things, it is easier for definitions to click when you can pair them with examples you might encounter on a daily basis. Review each data format's definition first and then use the examples to lock in your understanding.

## Primary versus secondary data

The following table highlights the differences between primary and secondary data and presents examples of each.

| Data format classification | Definition | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Primary data | Collected by a researcher from first-hand sources | • Data from an interview you conducted - Data from a survey returned from 20 participants<br><br>• Data from questionnaires you got back from a group of workers |
| Secondary data | Gathered by other people or from other research | • Data you bought from a local data analytics firm's customer profiles<br><br>• Demographic data collected by a university |