

# Geography in the Field II: Mapping London

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## Why London?

It is an exciting time to be a quantitative geographer in London. The city is generating more data for us to work with than ever before. Maps, graphics and infographics about the city are everywhere more people live here than at any time in London's history. A great example of the variety of data that is available for London is captured in the book [London: The Information Capital] by James Cheshire and Oliver Uberti. As geographers, we are in a critical position both to be able to capitalise on these developments for our own research but also view them a little more critically than others who have not had the benefit of decades of social and spatial research.

The application of quantitative research methods to data about the “real-world” is at the heart of this exercise. All data are collected at a single point in time and so may become out of date, or they may be too generalised to capture the minutiae of an area. Such limitations are not as significant as they once were since we now have access to data in more detail than ever before, but this does not relinquish the need to get a sense for the broader context of the study area.

## This week

This week we will be mapping crime **hotspots** in the London boroughs of Camden and Islington. The data we will be working with for this week’s task are downloaded from the data.police.uk website. The release of official police crime data to the public was controversial at the time, with some people expressing concern that areas will have reputational damage, that the identities of victims would be revealed and that there would be social and economic consequences such as a fall in house prices in high crime areas. Others argued that the release of the data would be an important step in making the police force more accountable since the public could track whether crimes were being solved or if police are using their stop and search powers to target specific groups.

**Note** You are expected to work through the following computer tutorial on your own, however, you need to submit your worksheet for this week as a group.

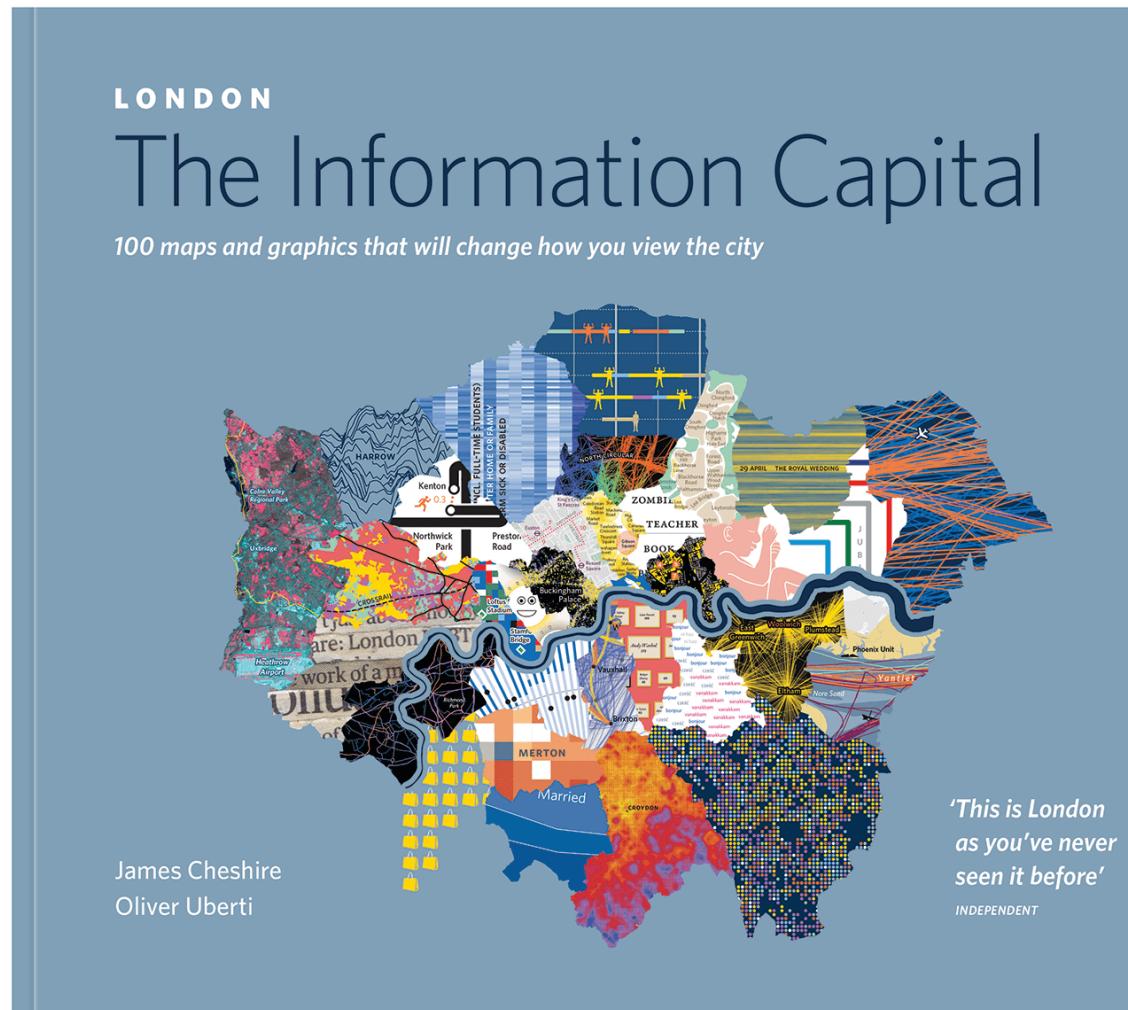


Figure 1: London: The Information Capital by Professor [James Cheshire](<https://jcheshire.com/>) and [Oliver Uberti](<https://www.oliveruberti.com/the-information-capital>).

## Getting started

Some of you may already have played around with some GIS software such as ArcGIS, but today we will be using the open-source GIS software suite QGIS. A copy of QGIS comes pre-installed on all cluster room computers as well as on Desktop@UCL Anywhere. Desktop@UCL Anywhere is a service that allows remote access to UCL resources for staff and students. All you need is a valid UCL user ID and password, an internet connection and supported web browser. Today we will be using this Desktop@UCL Anywhere service. Let's get started by opening an internet browser and navigating to: <https://ucldesktop.cloud.com>.

You can login with your normal **UCL username** and **UCL password**. After this, you click on the Desktop@UCL Anywhere icon to start the service:

It may take a few minutes to load, but after this you should see your normal UCL Windows desktop:

## Downloading crime data

## Mapping crime data

## Worksheet

Now you have worked through the steps in the computer tutorial on downloading and mapping crime data, you should do the following:

**Note** You should be conducting the below steps together with your group members. You can only submit one worksheet per group.

1. Using what you have learnt in the computer tutorial create two heat maps for **Camden and Islington**. The first of **anti-social behaviour** and the second of **bicycle theft**.
2. There are a number of crime **hot spots** for **anti-social behaviour** and **bicycle theft** that appear near UCL (particularly around Kings Cross Station). Using Google Streetview for context, what features distinguish them from their surrounding lower crime areas?
3. Using the data, zoom in on the street you have been allocated. What is the dominant type of crime on this street and its surrounding area in \*\*December\*\*?
4. Revisit the data.police.uk website and create a heatmap for crime around your street in **July 2021** and **December 2021**. As there may be very few or no crimes in your allocated street, you can zoom out a little to

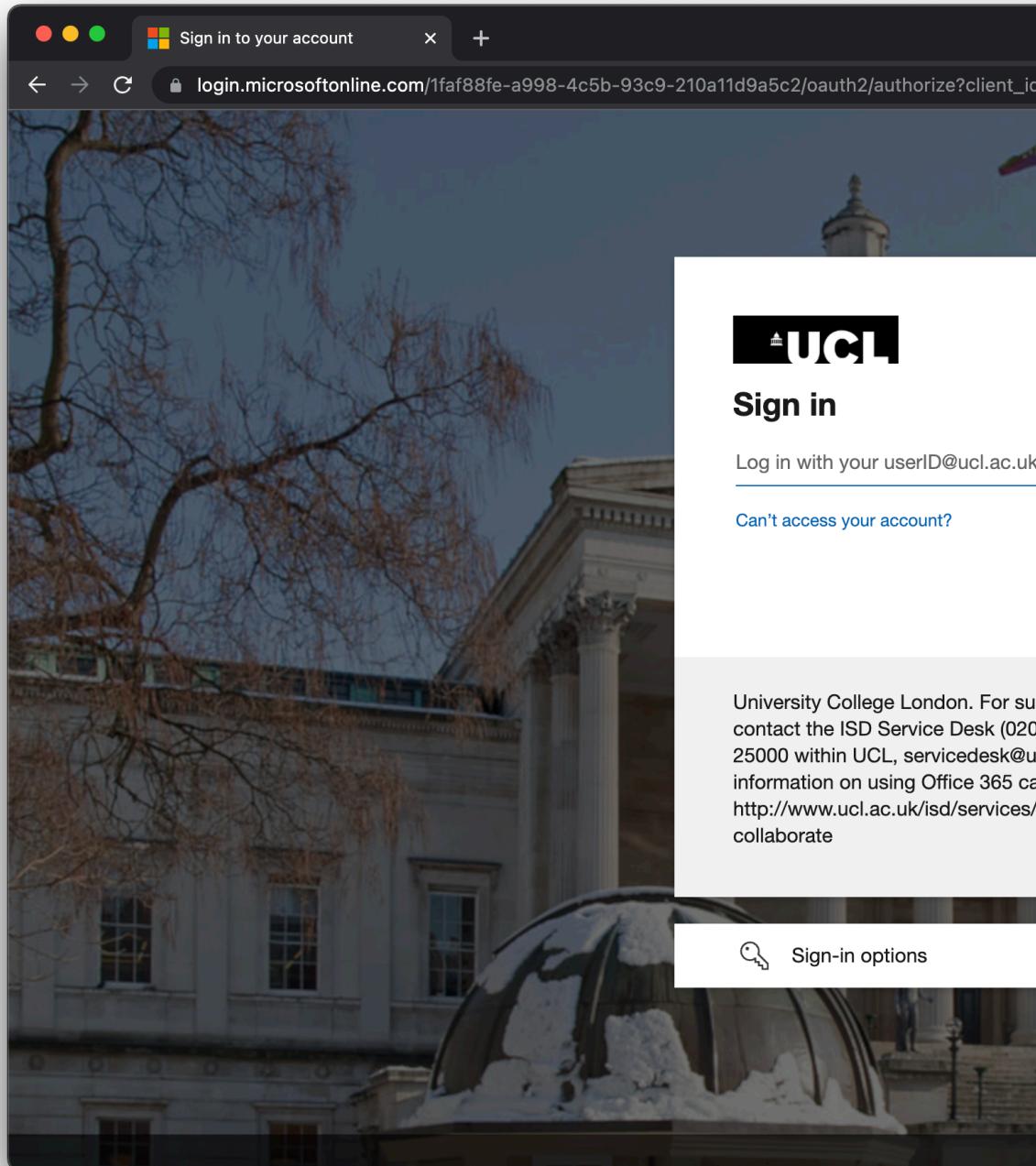


Figure 2: [Desktop@UCL Anywhere]((https://ucldesktop.cloud.com)) login interface.

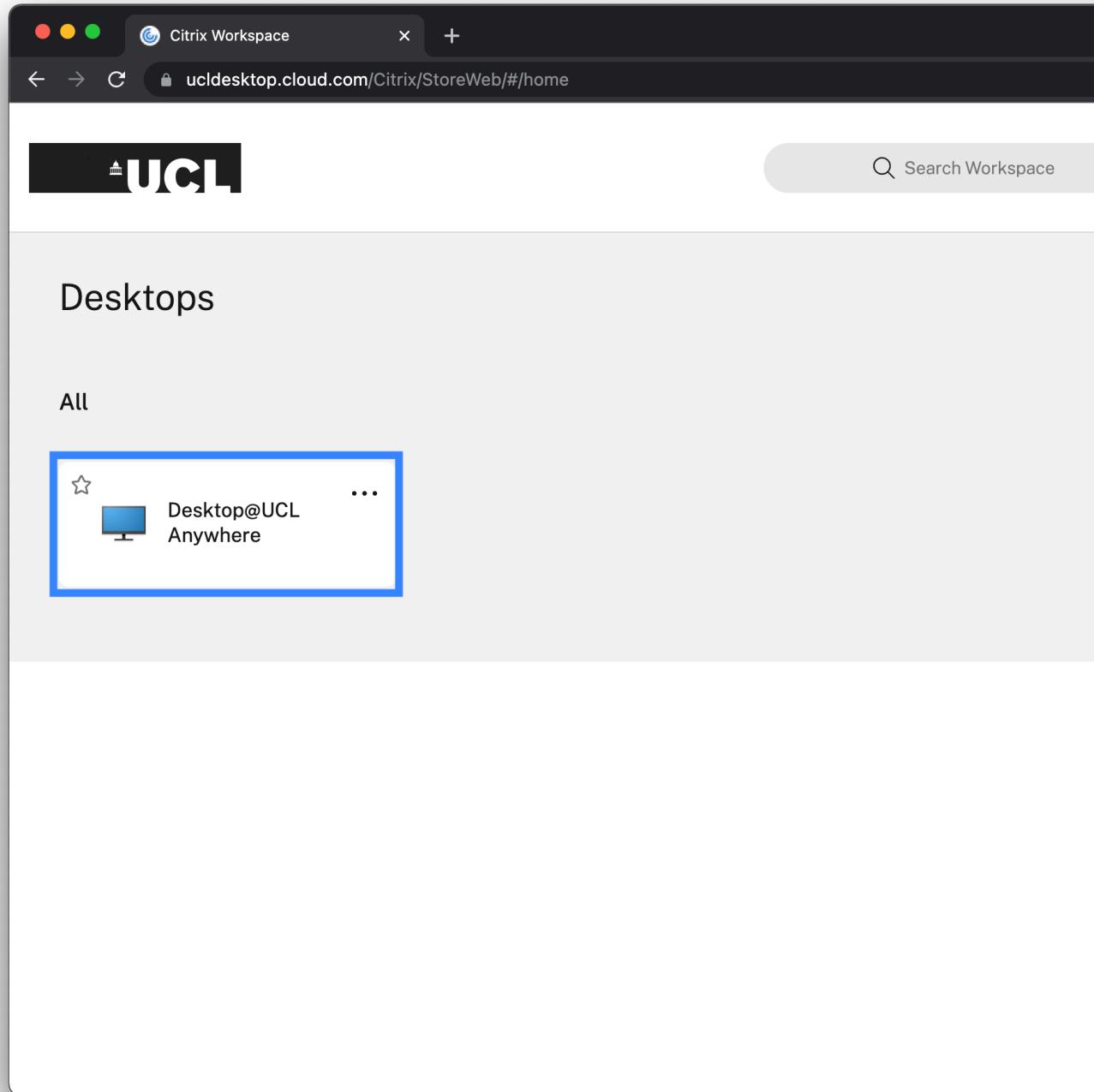


Figure 3: Starting [Desktop@UCL Anywhere]((https://ucldesktop.cloud.com)).

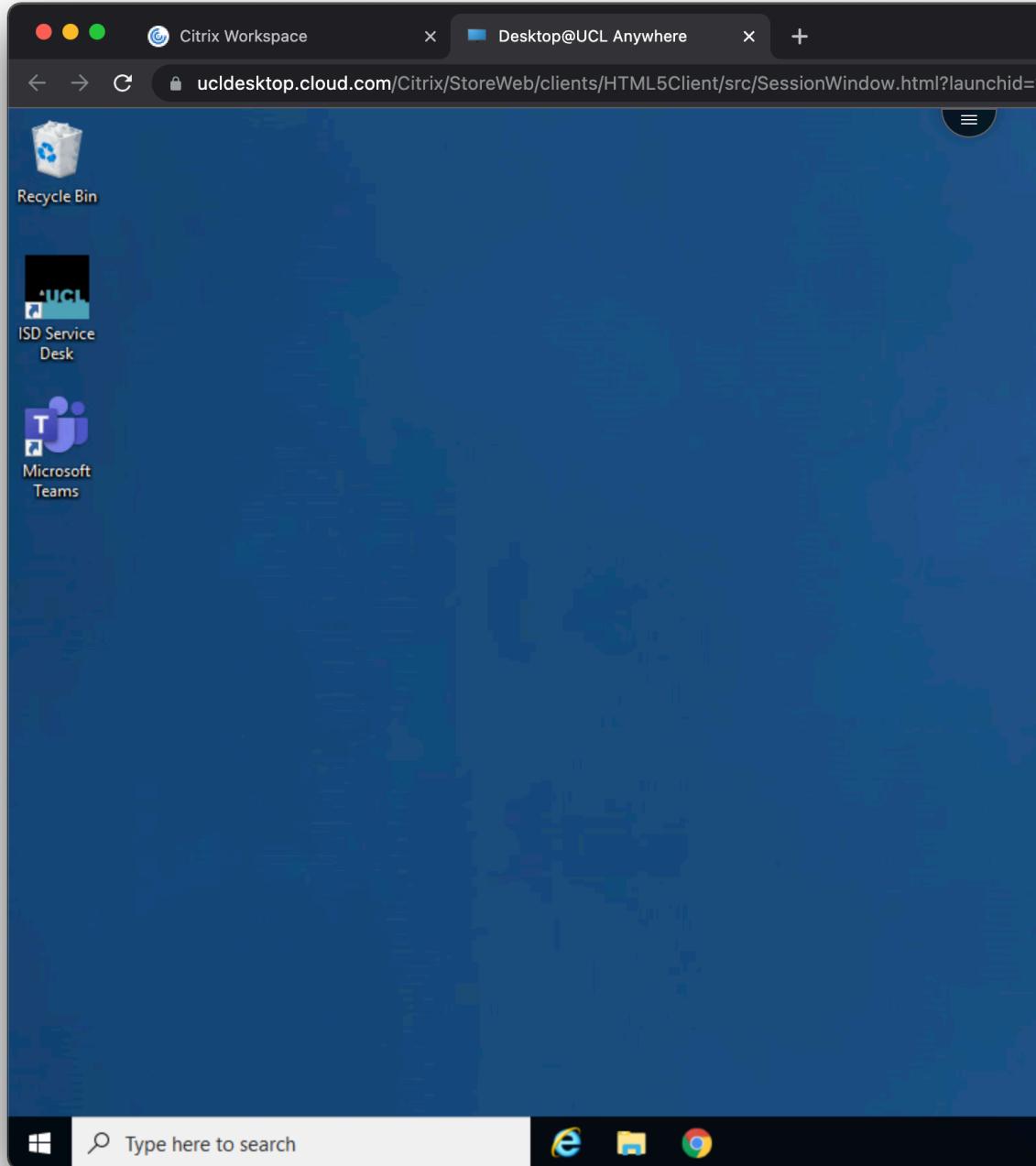


Figure 4: Your [Desktop@UCL Anywhere]((https://ucldesktop.cloud.com)).

- incorporate surrounding streets. Do the patterns and dominant crime types differ over the course of the year?
5. Given your knowledge of your street and your observations of the crime hotspots around UCL and Kings Cross what other datasets might be useful to analyse crime in London?
  6. Do you think the chances of falling victim of crime are higher or lower in the crime hotspots, how might you measure this?

## Submission

Please submit your answers to the questions above in a short **group** report: no more than **500** words, a maximum of **4** maps, and **2** photographs. This is the worksheet task for the week. You can find the submission link for this final worksheet task on Moodle; one submission per group. That is it for this week's Geography in the Field!