Data Reference Interview

Questions to ask when the researcher has a request related to data.

Start with Three Basic Questions

- **Who** needs the data?—a senior undergraduate, doctoral student, or faculty member? The researcher's experience with data influences the data needed to serve their purposes.
- **What data** is needed? Ask about the researcher's data needs and further explore their research plan, methodologies, bibliographic references, etc.
- **When** is it needed? Ask the scope and deadline of the user's research project.

Understand the Researcher's Plan

- What is the research question? How will it be refined?
- What data was used by articles from the literature review? How widely is it used?
- What is the data collection methodology? What are the limitations and possibilities for the data needed?
- What is the theoretical framework? Does it indicate the need for microdata or statistical summary?

Take More out of the Literature Review

- What data has been collected or used before? Who collected the data?
- Is there data to be collected? Can the existing data be reused?
- How has data been used or interpreted by other researchers?

Get Down to the Specific Data Attributes

- Who or what is the subject of the research? What is the unit of analysis or observation?
- When and where of the data?
  - » Data Currency: How recent does the data need to be?
  - » Data Frequency: Does the data need to be updated monthly, quarterly, annually, or at other intervals?
  - » Geographic Level: Is the research focused on a local, regional, national, or global level?
  - » Cross-sectional vs. Longitudinal: Does the research require data collected at a single point in time, or does it need repeated observations to analyze changes or trends over time?
- What are the concepts that need to be measured? What are the variables?

References

Liu, G., Bordelon, B., Nagar, R., Sarti, J., Nguyen, U., & Boettcher, J. (2024). *Data Quality Literacy: A Guidebook.* Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Grant Project. https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/ruawm

Visit the project website to learn more!
https://www.dataqualityliteracy.org

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