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# Activity 1-3

## The Location of Data

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**To continue the consideration of where the ‘data’ of social research might come from, prepare responses to the following questions:**

Consider the ‘data’ you already have access to. Think laterally here, and beyond the confines of your own work unit (what ‘data’ exists across the whole organization?)

What form does this data take- is it contained within a report or similar ‘official’ documentation, or is it data that has been generated by you; perhaps via your own observations of community, informally recorded notes, or indeed the insights provided by a colleague? Consider the types of data you already have access to, giving attention to the format and media type this data is held in and its physical location.

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How might these various sources of data be used? Does each type of data *do* different things?

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Are there considerations that need to be given according to how ‘reliable’ this data might be?

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Finally, how were these various data sources generated; were they prepared from earlier, *Existing* data, or *Created* first-hand by your organization?

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### Points to Note...

The *Module 1-1 Video* introduced the purpose of social research. In short, it might be noted that social research involves uncovering ‘data’- as sources of evidence- that enable the understanding of a particular event, phenomenon or group to form. Data in this sense is the ‘evidence’ the researcher uses to present findings about a particular event, phenomenon or group.

### The Task

There will likely be a considerable amount of ‘data’ already accessible within your local government setting. Data can take any number of forms- from the familiar, including reports and research papers- through to less familiar sources- including such things as attendance counts from previously held events, minutes from meetings, the observations of an event by colleagues, and so on.

Your task in this Activity is to consider what ‘data’ you might already have access to. Think laterally and creatively about the data that is already available to you.

Social Research Toolkit:

using social research in local government  
community engagement