

# Exploring the dataset: the catalogue page, documentation and Nesstar

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## Catalogue page and documentation

We will use the British Social Attitudes Survey 2016 but the processes for finding out about survey data will apply to all survey datasets.

Use Get data>Key data to find the British Social Attitudes Survey from among the Key UK Surveys.

- ⇒ Click on the title of the survey to go to the Series page.
- ⇒ Click on the Access tab
- ⇒ On the list that appears, click on BSA 2016 to go to the **catalogue page** for the BSA 2016.

The catalogue page includes information about the survey in the Details tab, the documentation from the survey providers in the Documentation tab and links to download the data in the Access tab.

**TASK:** Explore the BSA 2016 catalogue page to find out more about the data


1. When did the BSA series start?
  
2. Who deposits the BSA?
  
3. Which country or countries does the BSA cover? (Note: In this case it is obvious but often you cannot tell by the title of the survey) Hint: look in the Coverage and Methodology section
  
4. How many people are in the sample?
  - ⇒ In the *Documentation* tab, find the questionnaire and user guide. Open the questionnaire and search through questions about newspaper readership (note: these documents are searchable using Control-F.).
  
  - ⇒ Find where can you download the data? (Don't download the data now though). Hint: look in the Access tab – when you are logged in you will see the option to add the data to your account from where you can download the dataset in various formats including SPSS and Stata.)

## Exploring survey data online in Nesstar

Nesstar allows you to explore survey data online. You can conduct some basic analyses, create graphs and download subsets of the data. Anyone can explore the variables in Nesstar but for most other tasks you must log in to the UK Data Service first.

We will use Nesstar to explore a few variables in the BSA 2016.

**TASK:** Explore the British Social Attitudes 2016 data online using Nesstar

- ⇒ On the BSA 2016 catalogue page, in the Access tab, scroll to the top of the page and click the  link (near the bottom of the page).

In Nesstar, navigate using the left hand pane. The BSA 2016 should be highlighted in the list of datasets. Next to Variable Description, click on the + sign to see the categories of variables in the BSA 2016.

Find the variables for *Newspaper readership*. Look at the first variable on the list, which is about whether respondents regularly read morning newspapers (click on the question in the left hand pane and information should appear in the right hand pane):

5. What was the question asked?
6. What were the possible responses?
7. How many people answered "yes"?
8. Did anyone say they didn't know or refused to answer?
9. What are the codes for the 'Don't know' and 'Refusal' responses for this variable? ie what are the numbers assigned to those categories?

Now go to the next variable (about which newspaper they read):

10. Which are the most and least read newspapers on the list?
11. Looking at the SUMMARY STATISTICS below the table, how many missing cases are there for this question?
12. Can you see why there are so many missing cases? (Look at the UNIVERSE section at the bottom of the page)