

Statistical Research on the Internet

By Randy Guffey

Statistical research is normally conducted to assess marketplace demographics, compile information about market share, or obtain competitive intelligence. The statistics are normally compilations of numbers and percentages used to show ratios, values or comparisons. The Internet has made it possible to do high quality statistical research more easily and effectively. A good starting place for this type of research is the compendium of statistical data found at www.berinsteinresearch.com organized by alphabetical lists of subjects. Another is Princeton University's Data and Statistical Services located at <http://dss.princeton.edu>.

One of the most effective ways to conduct statistical research is through trade journals. These publications constantly compile information in their areas of expertise. Many trade journals are accessible at www.FindArticles.com. Two other free sources are (1) the collection on Google (www.google.com), located by going to the "Directory" tab on the main Google page, selecting Business as the major topic, next selecting the subject that is likely to contain the statistics you are seeking, then choosing a search phrase and selecting *Search Only In...* under the search window. (2) The next search can be done in Yahoo (www.yahoo.com), going to Business & Economy, then to News and Media, then Magazines, then Trade Magazines.

The federal government is also a comprehensive resource for statistics, starting with the gateway to U.S. government information at www.fedstats.gov, the Statistical Abstract at www.census.gov/statab/www, Census Bureau Fact Finder at <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?lang=en>, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics at www.bls.gov/data/home.htm. State Data Centers are found at www.census.gov/sdc/www. A good database is available at <http://dataferrett.census.gov/theDataWeb/index.html>. Note: take the time to read the tutorial if you will use this resource – it is worth it.

For those who will do substantial statistical research, any of the following tutorials are worthwhile: Rutgers University at <http://newarkwww.rutgers.edu/guides/buisness/busres.htm>; Inc. Magazine at www.inc.com/guides/write_biz_plan/24018.html; Entrepreneur Dot Com at www.entrepreneur.com/Your_Business/YB_Node/0,4507,452----,00.html; and the New Jersey Guide at www.njstatelib.org/cyberdesk/business/marketing_and_demographics.html. And for preparing surveys, see www.statpac.com/surveys. Finally, if you realize that you do not have the time and wish to hire the experts, see the lists at www.emarketer.com and www.worldopinion.com/news?cmd=item&id=1968 for professional statistical researchers.

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