

# Demystifying Data: Maximising Its Value

By: Andrea Daniels, Head of Strategic Marketing British Council

*“There were 5 exabytes\* of information created by the entire world between the dawn of civilization and 2003. Now that same amount is created every two days”*

*Eric Schmidt CEO Google*

*\*1 Billion gigabytes or 1,000,000,000,000,000 bytes*



**The availability of data has never been greater. But are we now in the age of data overload? How do we separate the wheat from the chaff? Is looking for insight and understanding becoming the modern day needle in the haystack?**

The benefit of understanding people's behavior, motivations and anticipating their needs is a well-established and accepted driver of competitive advantage and future success in both the commercial and service sector. As Philip Kotler famously stated: *"It is no longer enough to simply satisfy your customers, you must delight them"*

Surely, this should be simpler to achieve now than ever before? After all we are surrounded by data- lots of it. From the algorithms that determine the offers we receive from our local supermarket, to GPS tracking devices on our phones that can help us to navigate our way home, to stunning real-time info-graphics that track everything from global obesity levels to house prices.

The digital age has taken us from a world where data was costly and rare, to one of information overload. One estimate suggests that the data we produce is equivalent to a stack of books extending more than 4.37 light-years to Alpha Centauri, our closest neighboring star system in the Milky Way Galaxy.

That's a lot of data to analyse– let alone understand!

As John Naisbett author forewarned us in his 1982 New York Times bestseller, *Megatrends* are we in danger of "Drowning in information, but being starved of knowledge?"

The simple fact is that not all data is equal. Not all information is correct.

After all as is was famously cited over 100 years ago “*There are lies, there are damn lies, and there are statistics.*” We are all increasingly being tasked with deriving insight, understanding trends to underpin innovation, growth and even to support our day to day decisions, yet are we truly confident in our ability to do so? It is all too easy to find yourself drowning in a sea of data where the price of misinterpreting that information can be an all too costly one.

### **Why good data understanding matters....”**

In the frenzy over accountability, funders, donors, and the general public are calling for more programme evaluation. But few understand evaluation well enough to conduct or bankroll high-quality studies. Without sufficient knowledge or funding, nonprofits are often collecting heaps of dubious data, at great cost to themselves and ultimately to the people they serve”. Stanford Social Innovation Review 2014

This one-day programme is designed to give you the tools to effectively understand scope and confidently interpret data by unlocking the key principles, techniques and uses of quantitative analysis. Armed with these tools, you’ll be able to turn data into compelling cases to support and inform decisions.

This is not a statistics course, but it will give you the tools you need to feel confident and competent dealing with data and using it to drive action and understanding.

The 5 key principles the programme will cover are:

1. Starting well - How to scope, shape and develop research to deliver the insights you need
2. The tools of the trade: from weighting to sampling, sample sizes, and confidence intervals to significance testing and statistical analysis techniques
3. When to trust data - How to identify statistical fact from fiction
4. Unlocking meaning – how to interrogate the numbers present and report compelling findings
5. Turning data into action - building compelling insights and recommendations

This programme will benefit policy advisers and anyone working in an organisation that needs to understand and become more confident in the key principles of quantitative research and data analysis.

For more details [Click Here](#)

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**Andrea Daniels** has over 20 years' experience utilising and harnessing data to drive consumer understanding and growth for some of our leading organisations and brands.

Andrea is currently the Head of Strategic Marketing at the British Council, where she focuses on the application, dissemination and *understanding of* consumer insight within the organization to drive business innovation, support prioritization and harness opportunities for growth. Prior to joining the British Council, Andrea led the development and delivery of the BBC's first consumer engagement portal, bringing insight and understanding to all across the BBC through its digital delivery platforms. Andrea also has extensive experience of leading research and activity within the public and third sector having worked as a senior researcher and trainer at leading agencies Ipsos MORI and TNS Sofres.

She has an MBA from Open University Business School and is a holder of both the Market Research Society's Diploma in Research Methodology and a CAM Certificate in Marketing.