



# **Somewhere Out There: Government Data as the Ultimate OER**

**Great Lakes Resource Sharing Conference  
June 8, 2017**

**Emily Alford**



**Emily Alford**  
**Indiana University**  
**Social Science Librarian**  
**Government Information & Data**



**LIBRARIES**



# Key points

Open government information and data

➤ The past, the present, and the future

Tried and true

... and what the actual users  
think

Promotion and teaching methods

Remaining in-the-know

A look ahead





# Open government data... ??

- **American FactFinder**
- **U.S. departments and agencies**
- **UNdata**
- **Eurostat**
- **STATS Indiana**
- **Local crime maps**
- **City of Bloomington's Energy Dashboard**



# Investigative Journalism



**“My journalism students were able to use open government data to enhance originally reported news stories. They used data to investigate sources’ criminal records, marriage histories, residences and other biographical information. Students also used government data to verify information provided by human and documentary sources.”**

**- Joe Coleman, Professor of Practice**



# Educational Research



**“As an educational researcher conducting a longitudinal ethnography, Emily connected me to multiple open data and government sources to support my understanding of geographic and demographic contexts. US Census data, and GIS all helped me to better understand my research site and became useful in detailed discourse analysis to support teachers’ real work in schools. For example, studying maps of food insecurity demographics and food desert spaces helped teachers in one school to reach out to their community infrastructure to better support their students and their school-family relationships. As an educational researcher, these tools are so important, but even more so is learning how to navigate them!”**

**- Alexandra Panos, Education Researcher/PhD Candidate at IU**





# International Food Labeling Laws



**“As an undergraduate researcher with the 2020 Sustainability Scholars Program, I researched the comparative sustainability of food labeling laws in the U.S. and the EU. I relied heavily on the European Union’s online resources to gather data, which included accessing regulations, timelines, and FAQ pages. I emailed Europe Direct with a specific question about a recently altered labeling regulation and received a prompt response with an answer, as well as links to other helpful resources. My overall experience with this open, international government resource was positive and it has encouraged me to engage more directly with government agencies when it comes to research projects.”**

**- Halley Rose Meslin, IU 2020 Sustainability Scholar**



# Promotion and Teaching

- **Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration**
- **Showing versus telling**
- **When less is truly more**





## ... But how??

### Resources' resources

- Guided searches
- Glossary tools

### Social media

### Hear it through the grapevine

### Feedback





# A Look Ahead

- **More access. More features. More benefits.**
- **Pros > cons**
- **Our part as librarians and information professionals**





# Questions??

**Thank you for your time, interest, and attention.**

**Emily Alford, Indiana University**



Photo attributions:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/amystanley/5186953615/in/photolist-8UmuAK-7LoTKx-fZC4X8-5T8Hjb-qTAWdB-dbquac-CGKcv-9dyoJZ-u92mY-phfkNB-9vVbMR-qHBgiq-qteUmo-oMThzN-sqHfKP-r4jKYh-cRFuE-qgudvy-4YUJ3F-6EuB99-b1sPWT-bLVf7r-dSD4NP-bYXq9u-qJpU2C-q9BRcC-3dPMEz-dJe5W9-9mbHdV-tynHYU-aCuitc-r6C9Tr-y5tBL7-e3vnoB-97Tfjh-84ZSyy-qAGRf4-aj1Kej-qrqvu8-o3vzv7-7kxUgH-qShAdc-5KdLf2-5EXNFz-7zT5g1-xhmtm-dTTUXZ-dSJCdN-fjvx1G-nG4dfs>. 5 October 2016.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/untilmake/16711546835/in/photolist-rsK3DR-9mgdQX-nZq3sX-7kx2hY-dU6Ra7-4Lx8Lz-drZWxb-65yWcs-7JBoMR-nQhQUC-ieFpiK-bqnMbv-9XuVxJ-nN4rwh-pwV19L-9cfhcJ-8hwUzc-5aYIT6-7zooEV-4feyjs-rdZpV1-5uuwYC-mgfZVe-9rpuo-5zpLMc-86sztE-9J1SQG-bn91Sr-oCD795-9oLFsX-8dN9sf-f54gtt-7hQZEw-4HGVCg-GmsTpS-e5GECW-ha98nw-o7MYpY-gQ4w5D-rbThgZ-8Z3YSA-66dZcp-jK7GDV-hb7VU9-6GPA5h-55PpoZ-AcoJAU-brppUj-fSAqKM-9vYpnw>. 5 October 2016.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/jeffdjevdet/25250175003/in/photolist-EtgKjT-8zQSNP-nMZuS4-9AcngU-pMBX6k-pyKgLb-6bk484-8bi1EK-29tefu-51hAFv-idzfbN-eMmWtt-cFTmDq-9RHyio-9SuWM-dhcYmY-m5heiK-91Wa4c-qiwpvR-2e7bZv-dzMMBa-6EBTmq-a64jU5-9mR49k-2cjeoq-6YE3JE-aPqwCg-6JQ3CJ-hEXwvg-bMTtXx-7iJ3G7-dgZaYg-ajdACy-97yKSD-oSTJvp-afJiea-dBD9fw-9X3jEd-pos436-9roN1Z-qaf1g6-bmDGDW-8LPb3f-akJDCy-apyJvB-icbzd-91ZgDE-bqtvCV-eesqrm-a2nQpN>. 5 October 2016.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/107489497@N06/10670629035/in/photolist-hfVLfF-fFHvzz-bW3p2q-9X58Fz-q4PFYA-anY9Fv-rmQ8Rn-eZ4FH9-9794hV-85pGUE-cQZ9xb-47p952-cQZ9FC-H1wfcH-qjHTjj-ar32da-cK71JY-pMgfJp-FxhzBa-fgnpj-aa28fL-a2DK5X-9YcLct-qLyS67-shU1HX-htKFAT-cQZ8C9-2oNyCn-aq4eZL-Am2jtX-cQZ9mw-4eQgLi-x8yMVj-nH9tV1-cQZ8sq-pu4td2-BB7bKQ-DU5NpD-cQZ9df-bmGdWb-pMjEe2-93e3HH-kYM8ZV-awfFdx-nzSW-aC2fw9-6AX7aq-cQZ8KE-8MAX3s-awUd2f>. 5 October 2016.