



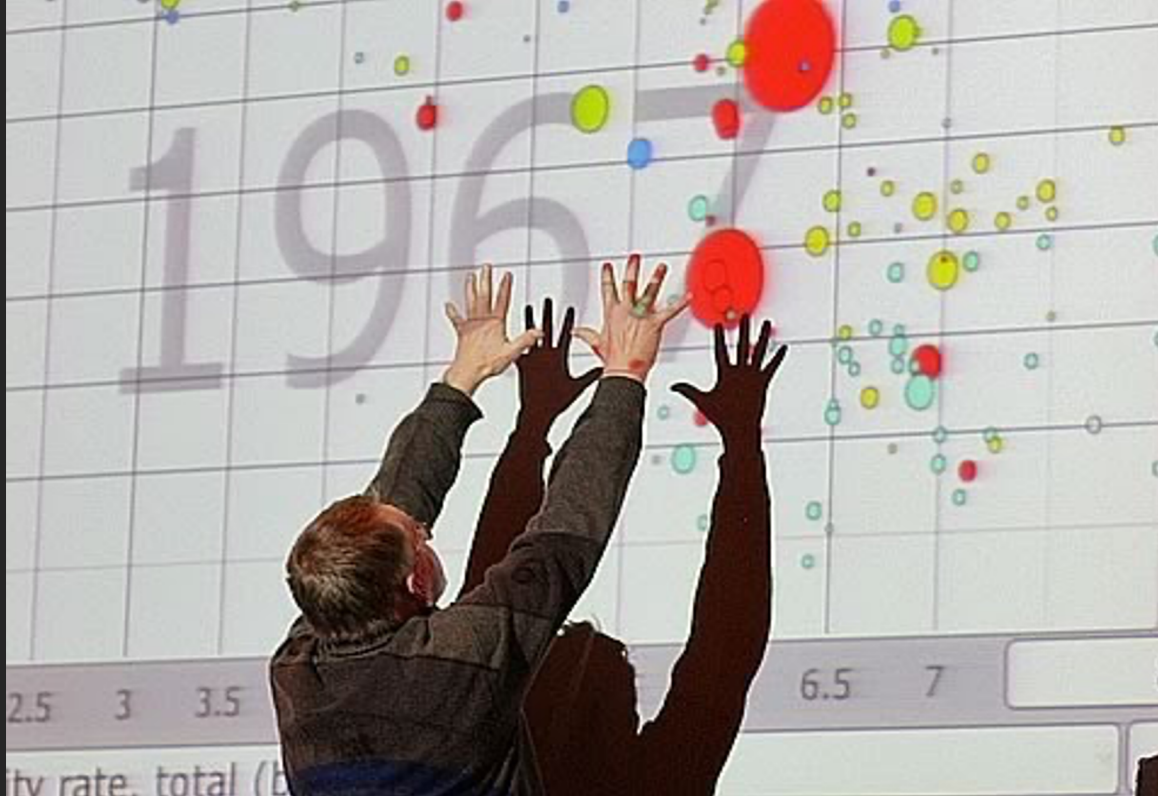
UNIVERSITY OF  
GOTHENBURG

# Verifying data




**Helena Löfving** [helena.lofving@img.gu.se](mailto:helena.lofving@img.gu.se)

Lecturer at JMG, Department of Journalism, Media and Communication,  
University of Gothenburg, Sweden



**Youtube:** "TED The best stats you've ever seen" | Hans Rosling  
<https://youtu.be/hVimVzgtD6w?t=251>

# UN data: Life expectancy at birth



[Datamarts](#) [Update Calendar](#) [Glossary](#) [API](#) [More](#)

life expectancy

[Find us on Facebook](#) [Follow us on Twitter](#) [Send us your Feedback](#)

Statistics

Life expectancy at birth for both sexes combined (years) [Search glossaries](#)Source: World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision | [United Nations Population Division](#)

Download

Explore

Select columns

Select sort order

Select pivot column

Link to this page

289 records | Page 1 of 6 | [H](#)

Current Filters:

☒ 2015-2020

Select filters:

Country or Area (289)

regions

- ☐ Sweden
- ☐ Switzerland
- ☐ Syrian Arab Republic
- ☐ Tajikistan
- ☐ Thailand

Year(s) (30)

- ☐ 2025-2030
- ☐ 2020-2025
- ☒ 2015-2020
- ☐ 2010-2015
- ☐ 2005-2010
- ☐ 2000-2005

☒ Apply Filters

Source

World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision

Source: [United Nations Population Division](#)

The 2019 Revision of World Population Prospects represents the latest global set of demographic estimates and projections prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. It displays key demographic indicators for selected periods or dates from 1950 to 2100, for the world, development groups, regions, subregions, and countries or areas with more than 90,000 inhabitants in 2019. For countries or areas with fewer than 90,000 inhabitants in 2019, only figures related to population size and growth are provided. The estimates and projections contained in this revision cover a 150-year time horizon, which can be subdivided into estimates (1950-2020) and projections (2020-2100). A sample set of summary indicators are provided as

Footnote

# Footnote

Source: United Nations Population Division

The 2019 Revision of World Population Prospects represents the latest global set of demographic estimates and projections prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. It displays key demographic indicators for selected periods or dates from 1950 to 2100, for the world, development groups, regions, subregions, and countries or areas with more than 90,000 inhabitants in 2019. For countries or areas with fewer than 90,000 inhabitants in 2019, only figures related to population size and growth are provided. The estimates and projections contained in this revision cover a 150-year time horizon, which can be subdivided into estimates (1950-2020) and projections (2020-2100). A sample set of summary indicators are provided as part of UNdata. More detailed data by age and sex are available from the Population Division's website. Citation: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019: Online Edition. Citation: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects: The 2019 Revision, DVD Edition.

Last update in UNdata: 2019/06/17

Next update in UNdata: 2021/06/15



When using data collected from more than one country (EU, globally)

Consider the big differences between countries:

- Measuring methods
- Sample
- Questions asked
- When/how often data is collected



# Data biography

For every piece of data you're going to include in your story, you need to create a data biography

- the background, or origin of your data.

Just as you'd do a background check on a human source before publishing what they told you, you need to understand your data

[Heather Krause, GJIN](#)



In other words:

# Treat data like any other source

- Authenticity
- Relationship in time
- Independence
- Freedom of tendency

# Data biography- always required

Microsoft Excel interface showing a data biography template titled "Data biography poverty exercise". The template is structured as a table with columns A, B, C, and D, and rows 1 through 17. The table is divided into sections for data collection and quality.

	A	B	C	D
1		Country 1	Country 2	Country 3
2				
3	Dataset Name			
4	Link to data source			
5	Who collected the data			
6	Who owns the data			
7	How was the data collected			
8	Sample Size			
9	Who was included/excluded from sample			
10	When was the data collected			
11	When was the data last updated			
12	Why was the data collected			
13	Notes on data quality			
14	Notes on data usage conditions			
15	Usable? Y/N			
16	Why?			
17				

<https://weallcount.com/tools/>

# Boring!



## Time consuming...

Designed by pch.vector / Freepik

# Boring!



# But!

Designed by pch.vector / Freepik



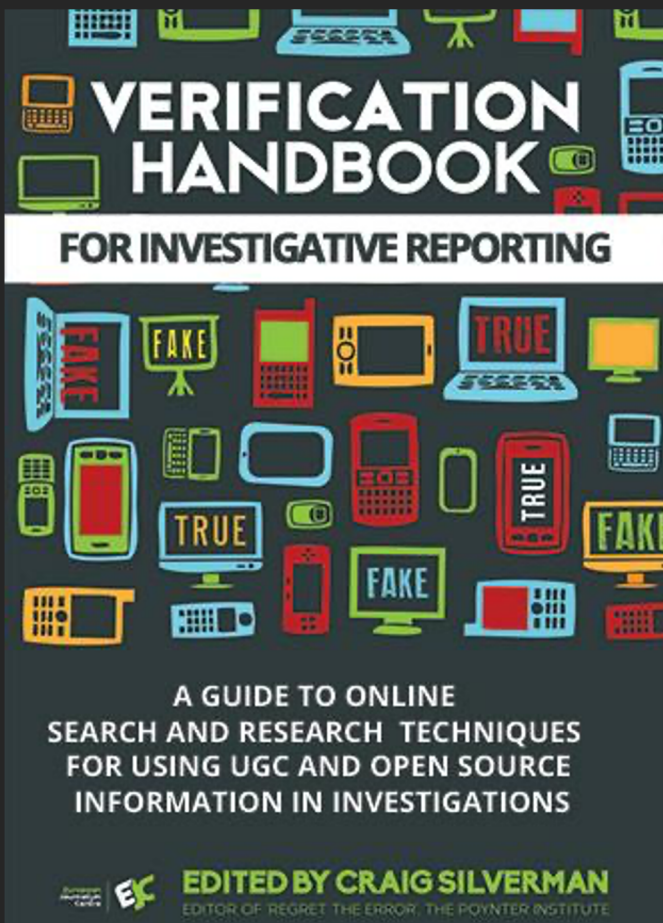
Worth the effort!



# Worth the effort!

- Accuracy
  - Better journalism
- you will find the errors instead of the audience





## Investigating with databases: Verifying data quality (chapter 5):

1. Is the data complete?
2. Are there duplicate records?
3. Are the data accurate?
4. Assessing data integrity
5. Deciphering codes and acronyms

[Verification handbook for investigative reporting](#)

**#fakenews    #fraud**

- not the most common problem

Bigger problem:

**#other\_focus #carelessness**

# Press releases

- often contain statistics
- sometimes contain graphs





”In the end, the discipline  
of verification  
is what separates journalism  
from entertainment,  
propaganda, fiction or art”

Rosenstiel & Kovach  
The Elements of Journalism

# There is more:

- Equity
- Ethics
- Accessibility

To be continued...