

Sources of Market Information and Statistics

Introduction

Finding market information relevant to a particular business idea or sector is a crucial part of both starting up and developing an enterprise. Market information helps when researching potential customers, competitors and suppliers, as well as finding information about the trends and dynamics within a particular business sector.

This factsheet provides an overview of some of the main sources of market information and statistical data available and how to access them.

Government and official statistics

A wide range of statistical data and reports are published online by Government departments and other official bodies, and access to these is free of charge.

Examples of government bodies that publish statistical data include the following.

The Office for National Statistics provides access to statistics across a range of topics, including business performance, employment trends, the economy, and population and consumer trends. Sector-specific statistics are provided for construction, retail, tourism, manufacturing, international trade and the IT and internet sector. Go to www.ons.gov.uk for further information.

Statistics for Wales provides access to official statistics and social and economic information about Wales in the form of reports and tables covering topics such as business, education, environment, culture, health and transport. A search tool is available enabling users to locate statistics by keyword or by topic and report type. Go to <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research> for further information.

Statistics.scot.gov provides statistical data about Scotland across a range of topics such as business, economic activity, employment, environment, education, transport and health. Users can search the data by subject matter, geographic area or keyword, or they can search for data from a particular organisation. Go to <https://statistics.gov.scot/home> for further information.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) provides access to statistics about Northern Ireland's population, including information about households, migration, births, deaths and marriages, and links to figures available from other official bodies. Go to www.nisra.gov.uk for further information.

Census data covers a wide range of topics, including housing, migration, ethnicity, religion and travel. It is useful for identifying potential demand for products and services from specific ethnic or age groups, or people in particular geographical locations. It identifies changing densities of population in geographical areas and reveals patterns of employment and cultural change. Census data also provides information about the characteristics of specific groups of people,

which can be helpful when carrying out market research aimed at identifying or profiling target customer groups.

To view census data and analysis, go to:

- The Office for National Statistics (www.ons.gov.uk/census), which publishes census data relating to England and Wales, as well as key census statistics for the whole of the UK.
- The Scottish Government (www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk).
- The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/census).

The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy produces statistics on energy, climate change, energy efficiency, fuel poverty, building materials, economic performance and employment, innovation and trade union membership. Go to www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-energy-and-industrial-strategy/about/statistics for more information.

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) produces statistics relating to the environment, rural communities, food, farming and biosecurity. Go to www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/about/statistics for further information.

UK Trade Info is an online resource operated by HM Revenue & Customs which provides access to statistical information about trade between the UK and countries both inside and outside the EU. Go to www.uktradeinfo.com for further information.

Eurostat produces official statistics for European Union member countries. Its publications are searchable by theme, including economy and finance, population and social conditions, industry and trade, agriculture, international trade, transport, environment and energy, and science and technology. Go to <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> for further information.

The Creative Industries Council is a joint forum between the creative industries and the Government. It publishes research, statistics and infographics about the UK creative economy. For more information, go to www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/facts-figures.

VisitBritain/VisitEngland is a national tourism development agency. It carries out the GB Tourism and GB Day Trips surveys and publishes extensive market research about tourism in England. For more information, go to www.visitbritain.org/england-research-insights. Market research relating specifically to tourism in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland is available as follows:

- Business Wales (<https://businesswales.gov.wales/tourism/research-and-insights>).
- VisitScotland (www.visitscotland.org/research-insights).
- Tourism Northern Ireland (www.tourismni.com/industry-insights).

Market research publishers

Some of the most up-to-date market information and statistics are available from commercial research providers and, although a limited amount of material is sometimes available free to view online, most publishers charge for access to full reports. However, many public reference libraries, universities and other institutions hold paid subscriptions, allowing their members free access.

Examples of market research publishers include the following.

Mintel specialises in consumer sectors such as beauty, food and drink, and retail. Mintel's reports cover a number of international markets as well as the UK and are available on an individual purchase or subscription basis. Go to www.mintel.com for further information.

Euromonitor covers international markets as well as the UK, across a wide range of industries. Reports on specific industries and consumer trends are available for individual purchase or on a subscription basis. Go to www.euromonitor.com for further information.

GlobalData is a market research provider covering international markets as well as the UK. Sectors that it covers include retail, technology, travel and tourism, banking and payments, foodservice and construction. Go to www.globaldata.com for further information.

Deloitte provides online access to a range of industry and market reports, as well as press releases and news articles. Sectors covered include consumer products, industrial products, automotive, transport, hospitality, financial services, healthcare and technology. Go to www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/explore/home.html for further information.

PwC provides online access to a range of publications, including industry reports and consumer surveys. Sectors covered include energy, financial services, manufacturing, real estate, retail, hospitality, technology and media. Go to www.pwc.co.uk for further information.

Trade and professional bodies

There are hundreds of trade associations and professional bodies, most of which publish reports and statistics on the industry they represent. Access is sometimes restricted to members or subscribers, but many organisations publish research online for anyone to view free of charge.

Go to www.britishtservices.co.uk/associations.htm and www.taforum.org/member-directory to search for relevant trade associations.

Trade publications and websites

Trade publications are a good source of up-to-date information on a particular market or sector. Many publications make content available online, although this is sometimes restricted to registered users or paying subscribers. To search for relevant trade publications, go to www.tradepub.com.

Hints and tips

- Market information resources are available at local business reference libraries. Library staff will be able to assist in finding relevant information and statistics to which they will usually offer free access.
- Press releases issued by market research agencies often include summaries of useful statistics, and can be a starting point for further research.
- Signing up to newsletters and following relevant trade associations via social media is a useful way to keep up to date with industry trends and developments.

Related factsheets

BIF001 Market Research Questionnaires

BIF044 Developing a Marketing Plan

BIF107 Profiling your Target Audience

BIF132 Researching Your Competitors

BIF185 Checklist for Start-up Market Research

BIF441 Business Information Available in Public Libraries

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