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**Working with Secondary Data: Syndicated and Big Data** will introduce the various secondary data sources available to you, the value and challenges you might encounter when linking primary and secondary data, and how to think about the increasing “big data” world in which businesses currently operate. Driven by the growth of big data, secondary data is getting increasing attention from the market research industry, and this course will give you a perspective on how to stay at the forefront of that growth.

Over the last 20 years or so we have seen a digital revolution—dramatic increases in the ability to collect, store, and process information, the global Internet, social media, mobile technology—that provide an unprecedented amount of behavioral and attitudinal data about the way people live and work, often referred to using the somewhat nebulous term, “big data.”

As a result, the research and insight function is extending beyond data collection and analysis to managing and synthesizing data from a diverse range of sources, from focus groups and sample surveys to social media and large databases.

Students and trainers of market research who see the future of big data might find that most of their professional lives still consists of more traditional market research work. Consequently, this course will cover both traditional uses of secondary data and the evolving application of digital big data in research. We will cover many different kinds of secondary data and research and its application to business challenges. We will start with the vast landscape of data and information obtainable from government and commercial sources and finish with an introduction to the frontier of big data and market research evolving in the market today.

**Course Note:** There is an immeasurable amount of secondary data available, and it is increasing exponentially. Working with this data sometimes requires resources and techniques that are outside the standard market research toolkit. Some are described in this course. A more thorough overview of some of these techniques can be found in our other course, *Advanced Analytic Techniques*.

Traditionally, data that is collected for any purpose other than to meet the needs of your particular study is called “secondary” data. However, the definition of secondary data is evolving. We’ll see that advances in technology are giving researchers access to vast potential sources of data and information that push the boundary of that definition. As such, this course will define secondary data as “data collected for another purpose and subsequently used in research.”

This course looks at three types of secondary data in some detail:

- Data collected for any purpose other than to meet the needs of your particular study.
- Data collected for non-specific research purposes, called “syndicated” or multi-client data.
- Data collected for another purpose and subsequently used in research.

This expanded scope allows us to properly address the secondary use of existing data regardless of its original source purpose or intent. We note also that the lines among these definition types is growing increasingly blurred, particularly the differences between traditional syndicated data and the data originally produced for purposes other than market research.

## Learning Objectives

After completing this course you should be able to:

1. Discuss how the integration of technology into our daily lives is creating new opportunities for market researchers.
2. Define secondary data as distinct from primary data.
3. Describe the various types of data sources available to researchers including syndicated data, transaction data, social media data, and Internet of Things data, emphasizing the strengths and weaknesses of each.
4. Describe the various components of the “big data” ecosystem, reinforcing that all data sources—primary and secondary—have compromises and the researcher’s responsibility to select the “best available data” given the business issue being studied.
5. Identify some of the typical barriers a researcher encounters in gaining access and using secondary data.
6. Discuss the related concepts of data governance, data curation, and data provenance and their importance in assessing the quality of secondary data.
7. Discuss the value and the challenges that can be realized by linking primary and secondary data, including the role of data brokers.
8. Discuss the ways in which traditional analytic techniques can be applied to secondary data.
9. Describe what is meant by machine learning and its relevance when working with large secondary datasets.
10. Discuss the challenges and emerging solutions that researchers face when dealing with unstructured data—text, photographs, video, etc.
11. Discuss the challenges the researcher faces when using secondary data in a global context.
12. Describe the ethical issues, especially related to privacy and confidentiality, when using secondary data.

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For more information about the

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