14.4: Data from Informal Sources

For the most part, data from informal sources is gathered by the other contributors. Informal sources create data about themselves through every activity they undertake. Aggregated information about online site users, individualized data about customers or readers, personal information about social networking site participants, and much more information about “average folks” is being vacuumed up through all of the methods we’ve outlined.

Conducting a poll is another way to think about gathering data from informal sources. If the group you want to learn something about is the general population, then a poll might be the best way to gather that data. We will discuss polls in much more detail in Lesson 15.