

Three Commonly Used Statistical Programs in the Social Sciences

SPSS (Statistical Program for the Social Sciences)

<http://www-01.ibm.com/software/analytics/spss/>

SPSS is perhaps the most commonly used analysis packaged used in Russia. Avoid picking up “discount” copies in Russia- they are often not licensed. Now operating under IBM, SPSS provides a free trail download of the most recent version (20) on their web site. Many people find the windows-based programming of SPSS easy to learn. Student discounts are available, and many Universities have special licensing agreements.

Data Files in SPSS are identified by the tag “.sav”- *filename.sav*

Resources:

UCLA has a very useful set of on-line tutorials available <http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/spss/> (also tutorials for SAS and STATA)

Psych Wiki has links to several very useful sites to assist with analysis and visuals

http://www.psychwiki.com/wiki/Want_help_using_SPSS%3F

STATA Data Analysis and Statistical Software

<http://stata.com/>

STATA is an increasingly popular, and very powerful, analysis package. Developed by scholars at Texas A&M University, this program is available at a sizeable academic discount through most Universities. Programs are written in “do files”, and there is an apparently endless “nerdiverse” of users on a multitude of sites who love to puzzle over elegant sample corrections and a wealth of other issues. They are a wonderful bunch and the resources on the STATA web site are impressive. There are several on-line training classes offered, and ample sources for programming support (including a frequent newsletter for users).

Data Files in STATA are identified by the tag “dta”- *filename.dta*

Resources:

The Penn State Pop Center has a useful number of guides and tutorials <http://help.pop.psu.edu/help-by-software-package/stata>

The STATA Blog is also a fine resource <http://blog.stata.com/2011/03/21/graphs-maps-and-geocoding/>

SAS <http://www.sas.com/>

Since 1976 SAS had been a popular analytical program. More recently, SAS has focused on their ability to handle especially large data sets (suitable for data mining), and the ability to organize and analyze longitudinal data. Academic packages and year-long licenses are available. There is ample reference material and many tutorials on their web site.

Data Files in SAS are identified by the long version tag “sas7bdat” – *filename.sas7bdat* (if using version 7 of SAS) or *filename.sav* in short version

Resources:

The University of North Carolina Pop Center has some excellent tutorials

http://www.cpc.unc.edu/research/tools/data_analysis/sastopics

Other options (this is only a very partial list), MS Excel can calculate basic measures of association and also has a “data tools” analytical add on packet. S-Plus is another package. R is also quite popular and useful.

A long list of shareware possibilities can be found at <http://www.supershareware.com/statistical-package-for-social-sciences-free/>

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