

Popular public data searches on google.com (U.S.)

By Jürgen Schwärzler, Statistician, Google public data team

People use public data in all kinds of ways, and they often turn to the web to find data that can help them in their own lives. For example, people may search for names for their newborn ("popular baby names"), to find out where to send their kids to school ("douglas county schools"), to research job prospects ("pharmacy technician salary") or simply to scope out the economic situation in different parts of the country ("nys unemployment").

After launching our [public data search feature](#) in April 2009, we were struck by the variety of public data people were searching for. By studying the patterns in anonymous search logs, we've gained insights into what kinds of public data people are most interested in. We're happy to share some of those insights in this document.

The top 80 most popular public data topics are below. This list is based on searches on google.com in the United States during the first week of November 2009. To be counted as a "public data" query, there had to be relevant statistics available from a government source or international agency. Public data topics are not individual queries, but rather clusters of types of information people were searching for. So, for example, "school comparisons" includes searches for metrics like educational attainment and college rankings. We determined these clusters manually by grouping closely related metrics together. In some instances where a bigger group of metrics (e.g., health conditions) contains a few dominant metrics (e.g., obesity, different cancer types) they are listed as separate topics rather than including them in the bigger group.

Most popular public data search topics:

#1 School comparisons	#41 Literacy rates
#2 Unemployment	#42 International trade
#3 Population	#43 Wind energy
#4 Sales tax	#44 Urbanization
#5 Salaries	#45 Commodity price
#6 Exchange rates	#46 Human development index (HDI)
#7 Crime	#47 Official development assistance (ODA)
#8 Health (health conditions)	#48 Social security tax
#9 Disasters	#49 Landfills
#10 Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	#50 Diesel price
#11 Last names	#51 Hunger
#12 Poverty	#52 Energy production
#13 Oil price	#53 Immigration
#14 Minimum wage	#54 Birth rate
#15 Consumer price index, inflation	#55 Marriage
#16 Mortality	#56 Food prices
#17 Cost of living	#57 Homelessness
#18 Election results	#58 Retail sales
#19 First names	#59 Abortion
#20 Accidents, traffic violations	#60 Teen pregnancy
#21 Gas price	#61 Corn price
#22 Obesity	#62 Military budget
#23 Prison/incarceration	#63 Gini coefficient
#24 Energy prices	#64 Housing starts
#25 Renewable energy	#65 Capital punishment
#26 Solar energy	#66 Child abuse
#27 Income	#67 Lay offs
#28 Life expectancy	#68 Animal life expectancy
#29 Learning disabilities	#69 Hydropower
#30 Budget	#70 Tidal energy
#31 Consumer spending	#71 Animal abuse
#32 Cancer	#72 House price index
#33 Global warming	#73 Recycling
#34 Foreign direct investment (FDI)	#74 Pollution
#35 Acid rain	#75 Adoption
#36 Divorce	#76 Bullying
#37 Weather	#77 Treasury rates
#38 Public debt	#78 Religion
#39 Disabilities	#79 Gun control
#40 Voter turnout	#80 Euthanasia

For more information on each of the above search topics, read on. We listed subtopics in some cases when the subtopic stood out as a notable portion of the larger grouping.

1. School comparisons - by school district, county, city or town

Includes subtopics: Educational attainment, college rankings

Example searches: douglas county schools, top law schools, mba rankings

2. Unemployment - by country, county, city or town

Example searches: nys unemployment, michigan unemployment rate, joblessness in washington state

3. Population - by country, city or town

Includes subtopics: absolute population, population density, population growth

Example searches: world population, population of china, how many people are in the united states, largest cities in the world, cities in mexico, population growth in developing countries, population density

4. Sales tax - by state

Example searches: california sales tax, sales tax rates by zip code

5. Salaries - by occupation

Example searches: pharmacy technician salary, nurse practitioner salary, ultrasound technician salary

6. Exchange rates - by currency

Example searches: canadian exchange rate, foreign exchange rates, dollar exchange rate

7. Crime - by state, county, city or town, zip code

Includes subtopics: Human trafficking, homicides, hate crime, sex trafficking, drug trafficking, domestic violence, money laundering, infanticide, child trafficking, violence, internet crimes, juvenile crime, white collar, crime against humanity, identity theft

Example searches: most dangerous cities in america, crime rates by city, rape statistics, child trafficking in thailand, domestic violence statistics, drug trafficking in mexico, hate crimes against gays, homicide rates by city, cyber crime statistics

8. Health (prevalence of health conditions) - by health condition

Includes subtopics: aids, alcohol abuse (by country), drug abuse, std's, prescription drug abuse, steroid abuse, swine flu, smoking, heroin abuse, eating disorder, autism, depression, diabetes

Note: Cancer prevalence (how many people are diagnosed with a disease) is clustered together with cancer survival rates and cancer life expectancies as "Cancer" (see #32).

Example searches: miscarriage statistics, h1n1 statistics, down syndrome statistics, anorexia statistics, bulimia statistics, cigarette smoking statistics

9. Disasters - by type of disaster

Includes subtopics: hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, storms, wildfires, volcanic eruptions, droughts

Note: The geographical breakdown of interest depends on the type of disaster and the location of the most recent disaster. People are interested in both the frequency and magnitude of a disaster in that particular area. During the time of this analysis, queries for [floods in georgia] and [floods in the philippines 2009] and [wildfires in montana] were frequent.

10. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) - by country

Includes subtopics: GDP nominal, GDP real, GDP per capita, Gross National Income (GNI), Gross National Product (GNP), Gross National Income per capita, capital spending, GDP deflator

Example searches: gdp per capita by country, united states GDP, list of countries by gdp, gross capital formation, capital expenditures, gdp implicit price deflator, gdp deflator data, saudi arabia's gross national product

11. Last names - by country of origin, language

Example searches: italian last names, common last names, last name origins

12. Poverty - by country, city or town

Includes subtopics: child poverty, poverty line

Example searches: poverty in america, poverty in africa, world poverty, poverty in india, poorest cities in america, federal poverty level

13. Oil price - by type of oil

Example searches: crude oil price chart, opec oil price

14. Minimum wage - by state

Example searches: california minimum wage, federal minimum wage

15. Consumer price index, inflation

Example searches: inflation rate 2009, zimbabwe inflation, current inflation rate, food price index

16. Mortality - by country, state, cause of death

Includes subtopics: swine flu, infant, teen suicides, suicide, flu, war, cancer

Example searches: suicide rates, flu deaths, teen suicide statistics, swine flu deaths in texas

17. Cost of living

Example searches: cost of living index by city, cost of living comparisons, cost of living in california

18. Election results

Note: Queries for election results are event-driven; during the time period of this analysis, elections were held in Germany and Massachusetts.

Example searches: german election results 2009, 2008 presidential election results, 2008 electoral map, electoral votes by state, ma senate race

19. First names - by gender

Includes subtopics: baby names (by gender), male first names, female first names (by language, country of origin and gender)

Note: Interestingly, queries for female first names are more frequent (+35%) than male first names.

Example searches: popular baby names, baby names 2009, japanese female names, french female names

20. Accidents, traffic violations

Includes subtopics: traffic accidents (car, motorcycle), drunk driving, distracted driving, aviation accidents

Example searches: texting while driving statistics, car accident statistics, drinking and driving statistics, plane crash statistics, dog bite statistics by breed

21. Gas price - by city or town

Includes subtopics: car fuel price, spot market price

Example searches: gas prices map, average gas prices, aviation fuel prices

22. Obesity

Example searches: childhood obesity statistics, body mass index, obesity life expectancy

23. Prisons/incarceration - by state

Includes subtopics: prison population, list of prisons

Example searches: ohio prisons, federal prisons, overcrowding in prisons

24. Energy prices - by type of fuel and state

Energy product prices, typically in use in private homes. Includes subtopics: Heating oil, natural gas, propane, kerosene

Example searches: georgia natural gas prices, natural gas furnace prices, propane price per gallon, ohio propane prices

25. Renewable energy

Example searches: renewable energy world, types of renewable energy, renewable energy sources, renewable energy electricity

26. Solar energy

Includes subtopics: costs, production

Example searches: solar energy facts, solar energy international

27. Income

Example searches: american income, disposable income, us income distribution, median household income

28. Life expectancy - by country

Includes subtopics: life expectancy at birth, further life expectancy, (further) life expectancy by disease (except cancer life expectancy, which is a separate category)

Example searches: average life expectancy in america, aids life expectancy, smoking life expectancy

29. Learning disabilities

Example searches: learning disabilities dyslexia, reading disabilities

30. Budget

Includes subtopics: Federal budget (by branch of government), state budgets

Note: Queries for this topic are news-driven. During the time of this analysis, queries for [michigan budget] and [california budget] were most popular.

Example searches: nasa budget, budget deficit, michigan budget

31. Consumer spending

Example searches: consumption, consumer spending, household consumption expenditures

32. Cancer - by type of cancer

Interest in cancer information is mainly by type of cancer; people also are interested in the prevalence (how many people have the cancer), how long can you live with this cancer and what is the survival rate. Includes subtopics: cancer prevalence, cancer life expectancy, cancer survival rate, lung cancer, pancreatic cancer, colon cancer, prostate cancer, ovarian cancer

Example searches: small cell lung cancer life expectancy, stage 3b lung cancer life expectancy, lung cancer survival rate, stage 4 pancreatic cancer life expectancy, colon cancer survival rate, metastatic prostate cancer life expectancy, ovarian cancer survival rate

33. Global warming

Example searches: co2 emissions, carbon emissions, greenhouse gases emissions, air quality index

34. Foreign direct investment (FDI) - by country

Example searches: fdi flows, foreign direct investment China

35. Acid rain

36. Divorce

Example searches: divorce rate

37. Weather - by city or town

Note: We considered only queries that would not target daily weather information.

Example searches: average temperatures

38. Public debt - by country

Example searches: us debt, china us debt, debt to gdp ratio

39. Disabilities

Example searches: children with disabilities, americans with disabilities, physical disabilities, types of disabilities, fitness and disabilities

40. Voter turnout

Example searches: voter turnout 2008 presidential election, voter turnout by country, voter turnout by age

41. Literacy rates - by country

Example searches: literacy statistics, illiteracy in the us

42. International trade

Example searches: us trade statistics, trade of oil

43. Wind energy - by state

Example searches: wind farms in the united states, renewable energy wind, offshore wind farms, wind power renewable energy

44. Urbanization - by country

Example searches: suburbanization, urbanization in america

45. Commodity price - by commodity

Excludes: oil, gas, propane and kerosene prices, which were summarized under "energy prices" containing household-type energy fuels (see #24).

Example searches: commodity price index, historical commodity prices, corn commodity prices, sugar commodity prices, gold commodity prices, milk commodity prices

46. Human development index (HDI) - by country

Example searches: HDI, human development index, hdi rank

47. Official development assistance (ODA)

Example searches: us foreign aid, foreign aid by country

48. Social security tax

Example searches: social security tax rate, social security taxes

49. Landfills

Example searches: landfills in the us, how many landfills are in the us

50. Diesel price

Example searches: diesel fuel prices, biodiesel prices, doe diesel prices

51. Hunger

Example searches: world hunger statistics

52. Energy production

Includes subtopics: energy production (non-renewable), energy production (coal)

Example searches: china coal energy, nonrenewable energy sources

53. Immigration

Example searches: illegal immigration statistics 2009, statistics immigration in australia

54. Birth rate - by countries

55. Marriage

Includes subtopics: marriage, same-sex marriage

Example searches: arranged marriage statistics, living together before marriage statistics, remarriage statistics, teen marriage statistics

56. Food prices

Note: Food prices were considered different from queries for consumer price index.

Example searches: wholesale food prices, food price index, seafood prices, grocery food prices

57. Homelessness

Example searches: homeless statistics, homeless veterans statistics, homeless population statistics

58. Retail sales

Example searches: car sales statistics, music sales statistics, dvd sales statistics

59. Abortion

Example searches: teenage abortion statistics

60. Teen pregnancy

Example searches: teen pregnancy statistics, teen pregnancy rates, teenage pregnancy statistics, teen pregnancy stats, teenage pregnancy stats

61. Corn price

Example searches: price of corn per bushel

62. Military budget

Example searches: military spending

63. Gini coefficient

Example searches: gini coefficient data, gini coefficient rankings

64. Housing starts

Example searches: housing starts 2009, housing starts forecast, housing starts data

65. Capital punishment

Example searches: death penalty, capital punishment statistics

66. Child abuse

67. Lay offs

68. Animal life expectancy - by animal/breed

Example searches: life expectancy of cats, lupus life expectancy, guinea pig life expectancy

69. Hydropower

Includes subtopics: Hydropower cost, hydropower production

Example searches: hydroelectric energy cost, hydroelectric energy production

70. Tidal energy

Example searches: tidal energy facts, tidal energy costs

71. Animal abuse

Example searches: animal cruelty statistics, dog abuse statistics, animal testing statistics

72. House price index - by city

Example searches: case shiller index, housing market statistics, fhfa us housing price index

73. Recycling

74. Pollution

75. Adoption

76. Bullying

77. Treasury rates

78. Religion

Example searches: world religion statistics, number of christians in the world

79. Gun control

80. Euthanasia