



checklist

- Once your online data sources have been determined, a range of suitable methods for analysing large-scale internet-derived data are at your disposal, including content analysis and social network analysis.
 - There are also more tailored methods available that are suited to analysing internet-derived data, namely data-mining and sentiment analysis.
 - It is important that you are familiar with how best to code and manage data (Chapter 19) before embarking on any analyses.
 - As with all internet-derived data, care must be taken if you want to generalise the results of your analyses.
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project

In Chapter 17, you were asked to imagine that you had been commissioned to carry out a research project on attitudes to alternative medicine among university students, collecting the data by directly interacting with research subjects via the internet. In this chapter, your task is to develop a research project which makes use of data found on the internet to explore the same topic:

- How will you identify a suitable sample of data? Where, on the internet, might you come across people discussing alternative medicine? Which platforms (Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, etc.) might you be particularly interested in? How would you define the set of data you would want to collect, and what tools would you need to collect it?
 - Having derived a sample of data, what kind of analysis would you want to do? Would you be exploring your data set for patterns, and if so, what kind of pattern might be interesting to you? Would social network analysis be appropriate? Would some form of content analysis or data mining help you to answer a social science research question?
 - Having conducted your analysis, what other kinds of contextual data would help you to make sense of any patterns you might identify? What other research methods might you want to use to find out why you found the patterns in attitudes to alternative medicine that you did?
 - In what ways might your data set not be representative of a wider public's views on alternative medicine? What factors shaped the data set that you found?
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