

Data Journalism

Communications & Media

Finding the story in a dataset without inventing one.

A safe order of work.

1

Interview the data

Who collected it, why, from whom, and what is excluded?

2

Clean and document

Record every change. A silent fix is an unreproducible result.

3

Find the pattern

Compare over time, per head and against a baseline, not raw totals.

4

Check with people

Take the finding to those it describes before you believe it.

5

Show the working

Publish method, caveats and, where possible, the data.

Correlation, small denominators and changed definitions produce most false data stories. Check the denominator before the headline.