

Tutorial for downloading and analyzing data from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

The agency, which goes by the acronym ACOA, is one of many federal institutions that uploads data to the federal government's [open data site](#), which is a repository for hundreds of datasets, some useful for journalists, some not. "Open data" is a policy adopted by developing countries and a growing number of Third World Nations. The policy, which has been dubbed a "movement", contains two important principles for journalists: a government's commitment to sharing data should be a default position; and that open data is equated to open government where citizens possess the right to gain easy access to downloadable data, and even the right to demand datasets absent from the website.

The good news for journalists is that open data is not only a global phenomenon, but one that has grown roots closer to home at the provincial and municipal levels. To date, news outlets like the Toronto Star have used it to tell stories about [missed garbage complaints](#), and [suicide calls](#).

You'll find a list of government open data websites by clicking [here](#).

Before we shift to the Atlantic Opportunities Agency, a word about the datasets you'll encounter on these websites. The datasets in question are in what are called "machine readable format", meaning they can be downloaded and opened in a spreadsheet such as Excel. For the most part, the files are in one of three formats: csv (comma separated value, text file and an Excel). You'll learn more about these file formats on pages 43 to 45 in chapter three of our textbook, [Computer-Assisted Reporting: A Comprehensive Primer](#), which you'll find in Carleton's bookstore.

Now, let's shift to our tutorial. Go to the federal [open data site](#), and select the "Open Data" icon.



Open Data

Search open data that is relevant to Canadians, learn how to work with datasets, and see what people have done with open data across the country.

Follow:



Search through our Open Data Portal.



[Search Through our Open Data Portal](#)

Looking for data about Government of Canada services, financials, national demographic information or high resolution maps? Discover that and more through our Open Data portal, your one-stop shop for Government of Canada open datasets.

[Open Data 101](#)

Learn what open data is, how to get the most out of it, and explore the principles that are guiding the Government of Canada's Open Data initiatives.

[Working with Data and Application Programming Interfaces](#)

Learn more about how to use a variety of data formats, including Application Programming Interfaces (APIs).

[Suggest a Dataset](#)

Can't find the dataset that you are looking for? Let us know!

[Apps Gallery](#)

Browse and download apps that were built both by the Canadian public and the Government of Canada that use open data.

[Submit Your App](#)

Have you made an application using GC Open Data or Open Information? If so, let us know and we will share it with Canadians in our [Apps Gallery](#).

[G8 Open Data Charter](#)

Review the [G8 Open Data Charter](#) and its [technical annex](#) which commit Canada and the other G8 nations to the proactive release of more high-

[Canada's G8 Open Data Action Plan](#)

See Canada's plan to implement the principles laid out in the G8 Charter.

Select the first link to the top left. On the right-hand side, you'll notice a list of federal organizations, click on the "Show more" link to obtain a full list.

The screenshot displays the Open Data Portal interface. At the top left, the title "Open Data Portal" is visible. Below it, a search bar is labeled "Search Datasets" with a "Suggest a Dataset" button. A search input field contains "Search..." and a search icon. Below the search bar, it indicates "244,631 datasets found" and an "Order by" dropdown menu set to "Last Modified".

On the right side, a "Search Filters" sidebar is highlighted with a red box. It features a "Organization" filter dropdown menu. Below this, a list of organizations is shown, each with a count of datasets in parentheses. The organizations listed include:

- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (2)
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (1821)
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (2)
- Canada Border Services Agency (6)
- Canada Council for the Arts (1)
- Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions (1)
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (31)
- Canada Revenue Agency (44)
- Canada Science and Technology Museum (1)
- Canadian Institute of Health Information (3)
- Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (4)
- Canadian Space Agency (6)
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (48)
- Correctional Service of Canada (3)
- Defence Research and Development Canada (1)
- Department of Finance Canada (130)
- Department of Justice (1)
- Elections Canada (5)
- Employment and Social Development Canada (71)
- Environment Canada (269)
- Financial Transactions and

The main content area shows three dataset results, each with a title, description, organization, and resource formats:

- Integrated pan-Arctic Snow Melt Onset from Satellite Measurements**: Organization: Environment Canada; Resource Formats: **gif** (highlighted with a red box).
- Government of Canada Spend Data by Department**: Organization: Public Works and Government Services Canada; Resource Formats: **CSV**, **XML**, **HTML** (all highlighted with a red box).
- Facts & Figures 2014: Immigration Overview - Temporary Residents**: Organization: Citizenship and Immigration Canada; Resource Formats: **XLS**, **doc** (both highlighted with a red box).

Please take a minute to notice the file formats we discussed above. In addition to the csv formats, the icons also indicate XML, HTML and doc. As long as you download a file with a “csv”, “txt”, “xls” (the older, pre-2007 version of Excel), or xlsx (any version from 2007 and on), you don’t have to worry about these other formats. However, it’s worth knowing that they exist.

The number beside each institution indicates the number of datasets. It’s also worth noting that this portal is a living document, meaning that departments continually add new data.

Select the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

Open Data Portal

Search Datasets Suggest a Dataset

Search...

2 datasets found Order by Last Modified

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

ACOA - Disclosure of Contracts Over \$10,000

This dataset provides information on contracts issued by or on behalf of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. On March 23, 2004, the Government announced a new policy on...

Organization: Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Resource Formats: **CSV**

ACOA Project Information

This dataset contains information about projects that have been approved by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency since 1995. Note: When the Atlantic Canada Opportunities...

Organization: Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Resource Formats: **CSV** **TXT**

You can also access this registry using the [API](#) (see [API Docs](#)).

Search Filters

Organization

[Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency \(2\)](#)

Data Type

[Raw Data \(2\)](#)

Tags

[ACOA \(2\)](#)
[Atlantic Canada \(2\)](#)
[Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency \(2\)](#)
[proactive disclosure \(1\)](#)
[procurement \(1\)](#)

[Show more](#)

Subject

[Economics and Industry \(1\)](#)
[Government and Politics \(1\)](#)

Most, if not all, federal institutions disclose the contracts they award that are worth more than \$10,000. These, too, is datasets rich with story ideas about who's getting federal money and how much. There is also a lot of cash to follow in the second link, "ACOA Project Information". It contains data in the "csv" and "txt" format. While both can be opened in Excel, you're better off selecting the csv file.

Click on the "csv" download button, open your download folder, move the file to another folder and open it in Excel.

Project Number	Client Name	Client Add	Client City	Client Post	Project De	Project Lo	Project Ge	Program T	Assistance	ACOA Assi	Total Govt	Eligible Arr	Total Proj	Public	Acci	Estimated	Estimated Completion Date
197595	(ISIS) Immi Halifax, B3 Halifax	B3L 4P1	IBDS fundi HALIFAX	1209034	Business D Non-Repa	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
198632	(ISIS) Immi Halifax, B3 Halifax	B3L 4P1	Immigrant ATLANTIC	1400000	BDP - Atlai Non-Repa	14,040.00	14,040.00	18,720.00	30,720.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
200029	(ISIS) Immi Halifax, B3 Halifax	B3L 4P1	The Immig ATLANTIC	1400000	BDP - Atlai Non-Repa	79,607.00	79,607.00	93,607.00	93,607.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
157116	* Quidi Vi St. John's, St. John's	A1B 2Z2	Environme ST. JOHN'S	1001519	Partnershi Non-Repa	35,000.00	50,000.00	69,378.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
154136	* Burin Per Marystow, Marystow	A0K 2M0	implement MARYSTO	1002024	ACOA - Ac: Grant	6,800.00	6,800.00	13,600.00	13,600.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
154135	* Burin Per Marystow, Marystow	A0K 2M0	Youth inte MARYSTO	1002024	Communit Non-Repa	15,001.00	15,001.00	33,600.00	33,600.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
113504	042691 N. Petit Roch, Petit Roch	E8J 2K7	To acquire PETIT-ROC	1315014	ACOA - Ac: Uncondit	9,520.00	9,520.00	23,800.00	23,800.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
185785	047100 N. Bouctouch, Bouctouch	E4S 2J2	Lean Anal, BOUCTOU	1308005	AIP - ISDI - Non-Repa	22,413.00	22,413.00	29,884.00	29,884.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
203111	051996 N. Mundevill, Mundevill	E4W 2N5	Building ex RICHIBUC	1308018	Business D Uncondit	74,618.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
167460	052412 N. Tracadie-S, Tracadie-S	E1X 1G6	Expansion SAUMARE	1315001	Business D Uncondit	18,400.00	18,400.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
167466	052412 N. Tracadie-S, Tracadie-S	E1X 1G6	Chalet/Cai SAUMARE	1315001	Business D Uncondit	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
183896	053247 N. St-Quentin, St-Quentin	E8A 2H9	Constructi SAINT-QU	1314022	Business D Uncondit	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
168364	054000 NE Beresford, Beresford	E0B 1H0	Purchase 2 BERESFOR	1315015	Agriculture Non-Repa	182	280	700	700	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
169969	056393 N. Bathurst, E Bathurst	E2A 4Z2	Estab. of E BATHURST	1315011	ACOA - Ac: Non-Repa	38,729.00	38,729.00	77,457.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
188994	056523 NE Bertrand, I Bertrand	E1W 1G8	Soundproc BERTRAN	1315036	Business D Uncondit	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
170082	056913 N. Moncton, Moncton	E1E 2L1	Develop & MONCTON	1307022	ACOA - Ac: Uncondit	97,100.00	97,100.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
173485	056975 N. Saint John, Saint John	E2M 5C2	Constructi SAINT JOH	1301006	Business D Uncondit	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
169880	057000 N. Campbell, Campbell	E3N 2A6	Strategic p CAMPBELL	1314014	Strategic A Non-Repa	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	(n/a)
182150	058126 NE Summersic, Summersic	C1N 4J1	Study to e: SUMMERS	1103021	Business D Non-Repa	25,000.00	75,000.00	86,200.00	86,200.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
170565	059063 N. Newcastle, Newcastle	E1V 3M3	Establish P NEWCAST	1309032	ACOA - Ac: Non-Repa	32,247.00	32,247.00	80,617.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
175501	100156 P.I Summersic, Summersic	C1N 4J9	Establishin LOT 23	1102042	Business D Uncondit	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
185791	100156 P.I Summersic, Summersic	C1N 4J9	Upgrade si LOT 23	1102042	Business D Uncondit	33,550.00	33,550.00	67,100.00	67,100.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
159997	100202 PE Albany, CO Albany	COB 1A0	Marketing LOT 27	1103006	ACOA - Ac: Non-Repa	24,250.00	24,250.00	48,500.00	50,117.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
159996	100202 PE Albany, CO Albany	COB 1A0	Establish m LOT 27	1103006	ACOA - Ac: Non-Repa	98,952.00	98,952.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	(n/a)
159995	100202 PE Albany, CO Albany	COB 1A0	Marketing LOT 27	1103006	Business D Uncondit	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
175649	100221 PE Charlottet, Charlottet	C1A 7N4	Develop in CHARLOTT	1102022	Business D Uncondit	10,300.00	23,100.00	30,800.00	30,800.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
175644	100221 PE Charlottet, Charlottet	C1A 7N4	Phase 2 of CHARLOTT	1102022	Business D Uncondit	47,700.00	47,700.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
175646	100221 PE Charlottet, Charlottet	C1A 7N4	Pre-comm CHARLOTT	1102022	Business D Condition	30,948.00	30,948.00	35,800.00	35,800.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
175850	100242 PE Hunter Riv, Hunter Riv	COA 1N0	Upgrade c LOT 23	1102042	Business D Uncondit	34,409.00	34,409.00	68,818.00	68,818.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
176888	100309 PE Charlottet, Charlottet	C1A 7J6	Extrusion c CHARLOTT	1102022	Business D Uncondit	87,790.00	87,790.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	
189991	100415 PE Charlottet, Charlottet	C1A 1A3	Expansion, CHARLOTT	1102022	Business D Uncondit	61,000.00	61,000.00	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	#####	

Re-adjust the number columns to get rid of the hash marks. Expand the column widths to make sure you can see the information. You'll find more on navigating Excel worksheets in chapter two of our textbook. As we did in class, copy the website's URL, paste it into the first available cell in the first row, make a copy of the Excel file, and work with that one. Rule number one when working with data: ALWAYS work from the back-up copy.

Now it's time to "interview" the data. In other words, study the information in the table to discover what it can and can't tell you, and what questions you need to ask the person in charge. Many of the tables on open-data portals contain so-called "readme" files that explain what kind of information is in each column. In general, tables with these datasets contain three types of information: numbers, dates and text.

You'll know if a value is a number or a date if the information justifies to the left. If it justifies to the left, it is text. Anything to the right is a number. This is an important distinction because a spreadsheet cannot perform math on text. So if your spreadsheet is reading a value as text instead of a number, you may have to reformat it as a number or currency. Downloading data from the Internet also usually involves a lot of reformatting: numbers to currency; adding 1000 separators to numbers, etc. So get used to formatting.

And speaking of formatting, let's reformat the columns with the dollar amounts as currency with no decimal points. The quickest way to do this is highlighting each simultaneously, right-clicking to obtain your short-cut menu, selecting the "format" option and choosing currency with no decimal points.

There are two ways to determine the number of rows or records in your table. Highlight a column to activate the number count feature on the border below the table. If a number is absent, click on the border to obtain a menu and select COUNT, which counts the number of rows in the table. Some versions of Excel allow you to select a number of these features. Others only allow one selection at a time.

The second way to determine the number of rows is to use the vertical scroll bar on your right to navigate to the bottom of the table and read the row number to the right. Again, after reading chapter three, and with a bit of practice, navigating a worksheet will become second nature.

This version of the dataset contains 30,770 records.

Navigate up and down: write the names of the column names, and describe the information they contain. As we mentioned in class, recording information about the data you've just downloaded is a good way to slow yourself down to find out what the data can tell you, what it can't, what's unclear and in need of follow-up. Also pay attention to whacky dates or other bits of information that appear to be mistakes. To use the old saying that has become cliché among data journalist, "all data is dirty". So assume that it contains mistakes.

Now let's sort the data fields to determine the dataset's age. There are three date columns. We determined that the best one to select was column O, the "Public Access Date".

O	P	Q
Public Access Date	Estimated Commencement Date	Estimated Completion Date
25/08/2015	01/08/2015	31/03/2016
25/08/2015	01/07/2015	31/12/2015
25/08/2015	01/06/2015	30/09/2015
25/08/2015	15/06/2015	31/03/2016
25/08/2015	01/09/2015	31/08/2016
25/08/2015	31/08/2015	29/02/2016
25/08/2015	01/06/2015	31/10/2015
24/08/2015	01/06/2015	31/03/2016
24/08/2015	01/07/2015	30/06/2016
24/08/2015	01/07/2015	31/03/2016
24/08/2015	01/08/2015	31/07/2016
24/08/2015	01/04/2015	31/03/2018
23/08/2015	01/04/2015	31/03/2016
23/08/2015	01/07/2015	31/12/2015
23/08/2015	31/07/2015	30/11/2016
22/08/2015	01/08/2015	31/12/2015

Since we downloaded this data on Sept. 2, the dataset is fairly recent, though it's worth asking how frequently it is updated. This is another important query to make before ever using data.

Now apply filter by clicking on the filter icon – the funnel -- to the far left located on the menu’s “Data” section. You will get a dialog box that looks something like this. Select currency.

The image shows an Excel spreadsheet with a 'Format Cells' dialog box open. The dialog box is set to the 'Number' category, and 'Currency' is selected in the list. The 'Sample' field shows 'Total Government Funding'. The 'Negative numbers' list has '-1,234' selected. The background spreadsheet shows columns for 'Total Government Funding', 'Eligible Amount', 'Total Project Cost', and 'Public Access Date'.

	J	K	L	M	N	O	
istar	▼	ACOA A	Total Government Fundir	Eligible Amou	Total Project Co	Public Access Da	Esti
conditic		6,484.00	6,484.00	12,967.00	12,967.00	25/08/2015	
n-Repa		26,000.00	42,000.00	52,000.00	52,000.00	25/08/2015	
n-Repa		93,760.00	187,520.00	201,367.00	210,520.00	25/08/2015	
n-Repa		99,750.00	199,750.00	297,761.00	297,761.00	25/08/2015	
ndition	##						
n-Repa		70					
conditic		26					
n-Repa		50					
n-Repa		74					
n-Repa	##						
n-Repa		50					
n-Repa	##						
n-Repa	##						
conditic		43					
n-Repa	##						
conditic		50					
n-Repa	##						
n-Repa		76					
n-Repa	##						
n-Repa	##						
n-Repa		85					
n-Repa	##						
n-Repa	##						
n-Repa		50					
conditic	##						
n-Repa	##						
conditic	##						
n-Repa		50					
conditic	#####		500,000.00	1,542,365.00	2,014,365.00	17/08/2015	

L	M	N
Total Government Fundir	Eligible Amou	Total Project Co
\$6,484	\$12,967	\$12,967
\$42,000	\$52,000	\$52,000
\$187,520	\$201,367	\$210,520
\$199,750	\$297,761	\$297,761
\$155,175	\$206,900	\$206,900
\$90,500	\$94,000	\$94,000
\$44,358	\$52,185	\$52,185
\$50,000	\$66,667	\$66,667
\$74,217	\$98,956	\$101,056
\$106,522	\$257,462	\$257,462
\$50,000	\$66,667	\$66,667
\$366,000	\$537,000	\$537,000
\$631,152	\$640,818	\$640,818
\$43,500	\$87,000	\$87,000
\$182,069	\$216,399	\$216,399
\$68,375	\$100,000	\$100,000
\$200,000	\$266,666	\$266,666
\$91,153	\$106,153	\$106,153
\$572,052	\$572,052	\$572,052
\$805,000	\$600,000	\$1,861,500
\$164,740	\$190,544	\$190,544
\$1,105,352	\$1,381,692	\$1,381,692
\$410,100	\$614,000	\$614,000
\$50,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
\$722,500	\$965,000	\$1,400,000
\$217,950	\$424,950	\$424,950
\$724,250	\$729,500	\$825,000
\$50,000	\$70,000	\$70,000
\$500,000	\$1,542,365	\$2,014,365
\$490,000	\$727,604	\$727,604
\$50,000	\$66,666	\$66,666

This is a rich dataset that contains many options for filtering. We chose column J, "Assistance Type".

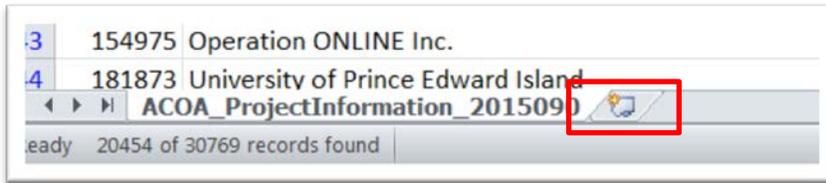
Connections			Sort & Filter			Data Tools			Outline		
Assistance Type											
D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M		
Client C	Client P	Project	Project	Project	Program	Assistar	ACOA A	Total Government Fundin	Eligible Amou		
Conceptio	A1W 3J1	Purchase	Sort A to Z					\$6,484	\$12,967		
Sydney	B1P 1C6	Hire a co	Sort Z to A					\$42,000	\$52,000		
Miramichi	E1V 2N5	Upgrade	Sort by Color					\$187,520	\$201,367		
St. John's	A1E 1W6	Undertak	Clear Filter From "Assistance Type"					\$199,750	\$297,761		
Saint John	E2L 4V1	Impleme	Filter by Color					\$155,175	\$206,900		
Dartmouth	B3B 1T5	Develop	Text Filters					\$90,500	\$94,000		
Elmsdale	COB 1K0	Purchase	Search					\$44,358	\$52,185		
Halifax	B3H 0A8	Hire a Ch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (Select All)					\$50,000	\$66,667		
St. John's	A1C 5S7	Strategic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Loan					\$74,217	\$98,956		
St. John's	A1C 5S7	Build inte	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conditionally Repayable Contribution					\$106,522	\$257,462		
Rocky Har	A0K 4N0	Hire a cu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant					\$50,000	\$66,667		
Charlottet	C1A 7N7	Support t	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interest Contribution/Buydown					\$366,000	\$537,000		
Mulgrave	B0E 2G0	Provide s	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Loan Insurance/Guarantee					\$631,152	\$640,818		
Grand-Sau	E3Y 1B5	Equipme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Repayable Contribution					\$43,500	\$87,000		
Annapolis	B0S 1A0	Undertak	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unconditionally Repayable Contribution					\$182,069	\$216,399		
Saint John	E2L 1H3	Purchase						\$68,375	\$100,000		
Halifax	B3J 3S9	Impleme						\$200,000	\$266,666		
Fredericto	E3B 5H1	Attend th						\$91,153	\$106,153		
St. John's	A1A 1W7	Support I						\$572,052	\$572,052		
Trinity, Trii	A0C 2S0	Produce						\$805,000	\$600,000		
Appleton	A0G 2K0	Develop						\$164,740	\$190,544		
Gander	A1V 1G7	Enhance						1,105,352	\$1,381,692		
Halifax	B3J 1E7	Fund star						\$410,100	\$614,000		
Bedford	B4B 0L9	Pursue n						\$50,000	\$100,000		
St-Prosper	G0M 1Y0	Upgrade a						\$722,500	\$965,000		
Dartmouth	B2Y 4P5	Support se						\$217,950	\$424,950		
St. John's	A1C 1C3	Purchase						\$724,350	\$720,500		

We were interested in the “Non-Repayable Contribution” category. De-select by clicking on the “(Select All)”, and then select the one you want. You can also make many selections such as all the assistance types that appear to be grants that institutions don’t have to pay back.

Now sort column K in descending order to find out which institution received the largest loan that it didn’t have to repay.

Project	Client A	Client C	Client P	Project	Project	Project	Program	Assistar	ACOA Assistance	Total
165558	CASH MANAGEMENT - EDA	Halifax	Halifax	(s/a)	Cash Manu	HALIFAX	1209021	Cash Manu	Non-Repa	28,100,000.00
165969	Technology & Science Secretariat (NS)	Halifax, B3	Halifax	B3I 3C8	IEI - Infore	NOVA SCC	1200000	Technolog	Non-Repa	23,520,631.00
803905	Sydney Ports Corporation Inc.	Sydney, B1	Sydney	B1P 6H2	Dredging c	SYDNEY	1217014	Enterprise	Non-Repa	19,000,000.00
159684	SOURIS FOOD PARK DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION	Charlottet	Charlottet	C1A 7L9	Creation o	SOURIS	1101036	Eastern Ki	Non-Repa	17,000,000.00
115012	Memorial University of Newfoundland	St. John's,	St. John's	A1B 3X5	Pan Atlant	ST. JOHN'S	1001519	AIP - Atlan	Non-Repa	15,242,000.00
181935	Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's,	St. John's	A1C 5S7	Inco Innov	ST. JOHN'S	1001519	AIP - Atlan	Non-Repa	13,113,492.00
171223	Minister of Finance-N.B.	Fredericto	Fredericto	E3B 5H1	Base Clos.	MIRAMICHI	1309050	Base Clos.	Non-Repa	10,347,500.00
203544	Forest Protection Limited	Lincoln, E3	Lincoln	E3B 7E6	Early Inter	FREDERIC	1310032	Atlantic In	Non-Repa	10,000,000.00
194460	Regional Development Corporation	Fredericto	Fredericto	E3B 5R4	Francophc	FREDERIC	1310032	Business D	Non-Repa	10,000,000.00
190260	Regional Development Corporation	Fredericto	Fredericto	E3B 5R4	Provide wr	FREDERIC	1310032	Business D	Non-Repa	10,000,000.00
185598	Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's,	St. John's	A1C 5S7	Inco Innov	ST. JOHN'S	1001519	Business D	Non-Repa	10,000,000.00
201276	Tourism Industry Association of Newfoundland and Labrador	Charlottet	Charlottet	C1A 7N7	2012-2015	ATLANTIC	1400000	BDP - Tour	Non-Repa	9,975,000.00
194701	Tourism Industry Association of Prince Edward Island	Charlottet	Charlottet	C1A 7N7	2009 - 201	ATLANTIC	1400000	BDP - Tour	Non-Repa	9,975,000.00
190023	Tourism Industry Association of Prince Edward Island	Charlottet	Charlottet	C1A 7N7	2006 - 200	CHARLOTT	1102022	BDP - Tour	Non-Repa	9,975,000.00
197160	The German Marshall Fund of the United States	Washington	Washington	20009	Deliver m	HALIFAX	1209034	Business D	Non-Repa	9,960,000.00
203565	Condo Trail Development Authority Inc.	Gr Martin	Gr Martin	E3B 1B7	Foundation	ST. MARTI	1301003	IFC - Strat	Non-Repa	9,800,000.00

Of course, we could filter the data in a number of ways. If you are happy with this subset of the data, select and copy it, create a new work sheet by clicking on the blank worksheet at the bottom of the workbook.



You can call it something like “Non-repayable_loans”. You’ll notice that names in databases are devoid of spaces for reasons we’ll explore later. If you want to separate words in a title, use an underscore, which Excel reads as a character. As well, keep the titles concise because you can only use a certain number characters when naming worksheets.

Return to our original worksheet, and get rid of the squiggly lines that border the table by scrolling to the far right, activating a cell outside the table and tapping your space bar.

Brace yourselves, now it’s time for a bit of math: Subtraction.

If you can remember, create two new columns, one that calculates the number of days between the “Estimated Commencement Date” and “Estimated Completion Date” columns. Remember, every calculation in Excel begins with an “=” sign. Copy the formula to the bottom of the table. Pages 84 to 86 of the textbook covers working with dates.

And, finally, create a new column which will calculate the number of years by dividing by 365. Copy the formula to the bottom of the table and filter out the error messages.

Questions to answer when working with specific datasets from open-data websites:

1. How often is the data set updated?
2. How many records or rows does it contain?
3. How does the institution use the data?
4. Who inputs the data?
5. What time period does it cover?
6. What information does it exclude and is it possible to obtain that information in the spirit of open data = open government?
7. What stories have been done using this data?
8. Is there at least one story idea in this dataset?

To-do list:

Now that you’ve mastered the steps outlined above. Now it’s time to look for story ideas beyond the ones we discussed in class.

1. Continue to navigate the dataset, perusing information in the columns we did not discuss in class.
2. Apply the filter once again to narrow the selections in the columns that were not part of the tutorial above.
3. Copy and paste subsets of the data in two more worksheets and think about possible stories the data could tell.
4. Be prepared to discuss the ideas in class.