



# Geography

Steve Graves  
Forensic Geography  
Lab: Finding and Download Data

## Background

Traditionally, one of the more difficult aspects of criminology research has been access to quality crime data. Your text discusses this. Though access to quality data is improving, it is still far from ideal. This lab is designed to introduce you to a few of the more promising sources of data.

Essentially, this assignment is a tour of crime data sources on the internet. You are encouraged to keep these data sources in mind as you progress through the semester and/or career; they may prove useful for a class project, thesis or other research endeavors.

## Data Sources

CrimeReports is a website that appears to gather data from law enforcement agencies around the United States and Canada. The map this site provides is useful as a first glance, but in many instances it will be more useful to go to the reporting agency (listed for each crime) and investigate their web site for data download options. Note that many areas have no crimes reported if the police do not make this data available. The Sex Offender registry appears to function well in this format.

<https://www.crimereports.com/>

CrimeMapping is another web map based data dissemination tool and it has a good deal more data. You should note that the addresses that are reported are generalized to protect the identity of victims. It seems an outstanding communicative device, but again has some limitations. You can limit your data search by date, type of crime and neighborhood, but easy download of long-term trend data will be difficult. For immediate, short-term crises or crime sprees though, this resource would seem excellent.

<http://www.crimemapping.com/>

There are several websites that will point you to longer term, trend data that is actually useful in a GIS environment. It seems however, that many of them eventually direct you back to the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD), which itself is a sub-project of the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). Here are the links.

Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR):

<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/>

National Archive of Criminal Justice Data (NACJD): <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NACJD/>

National Institute of Justice (U.S. Department of Justice): <http://www.nij.gov/maps/>

Bureau of Justice Statistics: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: <http://ojjdp.gov/>

### **Local Crime Data Access Points**

Los Angeles Times

Crime Page: <http://crime.latimes.com/>

Homicide Report: <http://projects.latimes.com/homicide/blog/page/1/>

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Main portal: <http://sheriff.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/lasd>

Crime Statistics Portal: <http://sheriff.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/lasd/crimeprevention/>

Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD)

Main page: <http://www.lapdonline.org/>

LAPD crime statistics: [http://www.lapdonline.org/crime\\_mapping\\_and\\_compstat](http://www.lapdonline.org/crime_mapping_and_compstat)

### **Task**

Your task is to gather three mappable data sets from three different sources and you will share this information with the rest of the class through the Wiki function in Moodle. Criteria for successful completion of this exercise are as follows:

1. Data must be mappable. All data must have a geographic identifier that allows it to be mapped, such as an address, a city, county or state name, a ZIP code, a FIPS code (like a census tract ID), or any other name or code number that can be joined to a map file.
2. You must write a paragraph (100 words?) describing the possible utility of this data set; perhaps what uses students may have for this data.
3. Key words would be nice.
4. You must identify where you obtained the data, providing a URL.