Where does IBISWorld source its data?

 Searching online is like looking for a needle in a haystack. Data is often out-of-date, incomplete or biased. Sourcing such material in a business report is fraught with problems.

As anyone that relies on accurate and up-to-date business intelligence will attest – the internet has revolutionized the speed with which we can access information.

But with billions of internet pages, finding the right information can be like looking for a needle in a haystack. Even if you have the good fortune to locate that information the chances are that it is out-of-date, incomplete or biased. Sourcing such material in a business report is fraught with problems.

IBISWorld is a world-leading provider of business information. We start with official and publicly available sources. Where those sources end an IBISWorld analyst can call on industry contacts and non-public sources. They are further supported by in-house data and modeling that provides the most accurate revenue and profit data and forecasts available.

Getting Started

When an analyst starts an industry report, he/she will first collate the statistics – only with the data can the analyst identify and analyze key industry trends. Information will generally come from four distinct sources; ‘Catch-all’, ‘Industry Specific’, ‘Industry Contacts’, and ‘IBISWorld In-House Databases’.

Catch-all Sources

These are the analyst’s first point of contact when analyzing an industry. The U.S. Census Bureau will provide the ‘backbone’ of the key statistics. The Economic Census occurs once every five years (1997, 2002 and 2007) and captures an industry’s revenue, wages, number of firms and employees.

The Census Bureau also provides information on non-employing firms, which can often make up a significant proportion of an industry’s operators.

The U.S. Census Bureau’s County Business Patterns and the Bureau of Labor Statistics help to fill in some of the gaps between Census years, and also provide data for the geographical segmentation section of our reports.

The U.S. International Trade Commission provides an industry’s trade numbers (imports and exports) and tariff data, which is used to determine industry globalization and domestic market size.

The data from these official sources provides the foundation for analysts to build upon, especially when they begin to compile five-year data forecasts.

Industry Specific Sources

Industry and Trade Associations are a vital source when looking for comment on current issues and trends (such as regulation and taxation), collecting statistics on production values, or on market and product segmentation.

Industry federations or regulators (such as the National Retail Federation, the Federal Reserve Board, or the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) provide data on specific sectors.

Reports from major industry players (such as SEC 10k filing) can also provide useful intelligence.

Industry specific sources are a good
complementary provider of industry information, but the perspective is that of one company, or a representative body and not necessarily typical (or balanced).

Further, in many small industries there are no associations or listed companies, which is when IBISWorld industry information comes into its own.

Industry Contacts
Often a direct industry contact will be required to shed light on a challenging problem, or to provide immediate feedback on trends yet to be reflected in official data.

By attending conferences, visiting clients, giving presentations or through previous work experience, analysts have in-field contacts and connections to call for ‘real world’ advice on operating conditions.

IBISWorld In-House Databases
IBISWorld has a database of statistics and analysis on 700 U.S. industries (which provide our supply chain data). IBISWorld also writes Global industry reports, as well as industry reports on China and Australia.

Moreover, IBISWorld has over 2,000 Business Environment reports on U.S. and world macroeconomic variables and demographic and consumer trends. Our company database contains financial data on over 8,000 U.S. companies and 2,500 Australian companies.