

# Data Gathering

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## **Abstract**

The first stage in information system development is the analysis of existing system and gathering/collecting data necessary for understanding ways of conducting business.

**Key words:** *Management Information System, MIS, Information System, IS, Electronic Enterprise, Information Technology, IT, Data gathering, Data analysis.*

**Methodology:** Business Analysis, web search and books review.

## **Introduction**

The system analyst starts by gathering data either from internal or external sources.

## **Study structure**

There are several techniques for collecting data: Interviews, Observation and Questionnaires.

**Interviews:** System analyst obtains information about existing system or existing business models by interviewing employees and their managers. Interview is a meeting between system analyst and an interviewee (employee for example) in which the former poses a set of questions and expects answers from the latter. An interview may be structured or unstructured. In a structured interview the questions are written and specified in advance while in unstructured interviews the questions are not pre-specified and the questions depend on the interviewer experience in posing the right questions that uncover hidden problems or remove ambiguity of a business process. System analyst may need to conduct several interviews with the same people to ensure and verify his/her understanding of the business processes performed.

**Questionnaires:** When data is needed from several people spread over a wide geographic area questionnaires is better used. Questionnaires are a set of written questions designed to gather information from individuals. Questionnaires are used to help participants to answer questions and give their opinions freely because the results of questionnaires are anonymous. But sometimes they may not result in quality and useful data. This is because either participants fail to complete the whole questionnaire or if they are not interested they may provide incomplete or inaccurate answers.

Observation: Another way for collecting required information about existing system or on how employee conduct business is to observe existing system in action and watching employees using it or to work alongside them. This method lack efficiency because it can take days or weeks to get information that system analyst can get it in an hour through interview or questionnaires. But this method is useful in uncovering how employees deal with exceptions and non-routine situations in businesses that may not be covered in interviews or questionnaires.

**Conclusion:** Data collection is a term used to describe a process of preparing and collecting data. Systematic gathering of data for a particular purpose from various sources, that has been systematically observed, recorded, organized. Data are the basic inputs to any decision making process in business.

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