

Using Data: Questions every savvy data consumer should ask

1. *What do we need to know? And what are we willing to give up to get that information?*

2. *What is/should be measured?*

- For whom or what (units)?
- How? (Is it a representative sample? How collected? How defined?)
- For what time period? (when and how long)

3. *Compared to what?*

- What is an appropriate benchmark or comparison?
- What would it look like if the outcome (or explanation) were perfect?

4. *Is this a pattern?*

- Is it randomness (statistical significance)?
- What else could potentially influence these measures?
- What have we (or could we) “control for”?

5. *How does this information fit with what else I know?*

- Is it consistent with what you know from other sources?
- MAGIC criteria: magnitude, articulation, generality, interest, and credibility

6. *What does this imply for what we should do next?*