Orbis Database for Our Research: A Practical User Guide

This user guide will show you how to utilize **Orbis - Bureau van Dijk** database available at the Victoria University library for our research. Using the perspective from a research student, this guide provides a practical, straightforward guide to collect data. In order to do so, we provide an example of data need for an illustrative purpose. Other needs of different data are easy to collect after understanding this guide and exploring the database by yourself.

Let's start by identifying a hypothetical model we would like to examine. For an illustrative purpose, let's say we are interested in examining the relationship between stock return and dividends as specified by the following model:

$$return_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 dividend_{it} + \beta_2 ROA_{it} + \beta_3 asset_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where *return* is the stock return, calculated by $return_{it} = \log(price_{it} \ price_{it-1})$; *dividend* is the ordinary dividend payment; ROA is return on assets, and *asset* is the total assets. The subscript *i* denotes individual firms and t indexes year. *ROA* and *asset* are set as control variables.

Again, as an illustrative purpose, we are interested in Australian equity market over the period 2008-2012. Our sample is non finance firms listed on the Australian Stock Exchange. With this need, we practically would collect a panel data set which looks like as follows:



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After entering our student ID and library password, we will have a full access to the database:

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Remember that we aim to download **non-finance listed** firm accounting data from **Australia** over the period **2008-2012**.

First we need to choose Australia by the following steps:

Click Location -> World region/Country/Region in country

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We will find this screen below. Looking at the summary (as indicated below), we know that Orbis covers data for 564,348 firms around the world, where 16,851 are located in Australia.

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However, we only need data form listed firms; therefore we shall limit the search further by clicking *Legal form* and then *Public/Private/Branch*:



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And then click *Stock data -> Listed/unlisted companies* and *OK*

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Now, we can see that the number of listed firms in Australia covered by Orbis is 1,840 firms.

Please note that we only choose firms that are still listed as of the time we access the databases. If we want also covers unlisted firms, for instance to avoid survival bias, we may also click *Formerly publicly listed companies* to cover delisted firms. If a country has two or more stock exchanges, we may need to choose one or some stock exchanges by clicking *Stock data* and *Stock exchange*, as shown below.

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Please be aware that industry classifications are different from country to country. Orbis have five different industry classifications: NACE Rev.2, NAICS 2007, US SIC, NACE Rev. 2 main sections and BvD major sections. We leave the definitions of each of them for you to explore.

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Our final sample now consists of 1,744 non finance firms:

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From here we invite you to fully explore all **Options** available to identify data you may need. We can also delete the columns as mentioned above by unticking in **Your Selection**. Let's untick all boxes.

In our case, variables we need to download are industry, stock price, dividend payment, ROA and total assets.

Let's start from **industry** data. Click *Industry & activities*, *Industry classification* and tick *BvD major section*. We can see that BvD major section now exists under **Variables** in Your Selection. This indicates we have selected the industry data to download.



Now select **stock price** data. Click *Stock data* and *Annual stock data*:

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After clicking *Market price – year end*, we will see the screen below.

Click **Absolute years**, then tick 2012, 2011, ..., 2007. Click also original currency, or equivalently we also can tick AUD and untick USD. Exchange rate that is used is at each closing date. Note that we also add 2007 even though our sample period is 2008-2012; this is because we need stock price in 2007 to calculate return in 2008.

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Click *OK*, and now the **stock price data** has been selected, together with BvD major sector. Note that if you also see *Market price* | *Lastest avail. year* under *Variables*, that happens because you have not unticked *Last avail. year* in **Relative years** before we click **Absolute years**.



Now, search for ordinary dividends and select it. We can find ordinary dividends under *Financial data*, *Detailed Format*, *Profit & loss account:*



Again we click **Absolute periods** and tick 2012, ..., 2008. Tick original currency (or tick AUD and untick USD), tick thousand under **Unit** (it is up to you to choose the unit you like; here we choose thousand), and tick at each closing date under **Exchange rate**. Click OK.



Next, ROA can be found under *Financial data*, *Global ratios*, *Industry companies*. Choose *ROA using Net income (%)*. Note that ROA is measured as a percentage, so now we only need to choose years, not currency, unit and exchange rate.



Finally, total assets can be found under *Financial data*, and *Key financial & employees*. Do the same things as before, to get:



Check again if all variables we need are already under **Variables**; or we can modify them if necessary. In our case, we need to untick *ROA using Net Income* | *latest avail. yr*. If every thing is ok as we need, click OK

Here are the final results we need. Oops- not exactly final actually, but very close to get there. Some notes here:

- 1. There are **1,744 non finance firms** in our sample. We can see that the display below is only the first of 70 screens. We can scroll down to check this.
- 2. There are 22 columns for all variables (1 for industry, 6 for stock prices, 5 for each dividends, ROA, and assets). We can scroll to the right to check this.
- 3. We can save the search strategy by clicking **Save.** Search strategy is the options we set to define our sample i.e. *non finance Australian listed public firms.*
- 4. We can save or export the result into a Microsoft Excel file by clicking Export.

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	Chamicals wither plotters	20.29	22.25	20.01	74.09	27.77		Segmentation	
	Wholesale & retail trade	26.38	27.75	27.02	26.36	24.45		Peer analysis	
	Chemicals rubber plastics p	19.21	11.77	14.37	9.30	7 19		Aggregation	
6. X T I TELSTRA CORPORATION LIMITED	Post & telecommunications	3.69	2.89	3.25	3.39	4.24		Statistical distribution	
7. X I I LEIGHTON HOLDINGS LIMITED	Construction	17.88	19.04	28.95	23.50	50.85		A concentration analysis	
8. X I I DANTAS AIRWAYS LIMITED	Transport	1.08	1.84	2.20	2.01	3.04		A SME applycic	
9. X C RIGIN ENERGY LIMITED	Primary sector	12.20	15.79	14.94	14.64	16.12		Mailing	
10. X T V METCASH LIMITED	Wholesale & retail trade	3.96	4.06	4.06	4.16	4.22		1 Mailing	
11. X C AMCOR LIMITED	Wood, cork, paper	7.09	7.20	6.38	4.99	5.05		Hie	de -
12. X T / LEND LEASE GROUP	Other services	7.20	8.97	7.33	n.a.	n.a.			_
13. X AGL ENERGY LIMITED	Gas, Water, Electricity	14.77	14.65	14.70	13.45	14.30			
14. X 🔲 🍸 FORTESCUE METAL GROUP LIMIT	ED Metals & metal products	4.90	6.35	4.12	3.79	11.90			
15. X 🔲 🧭 WORLEYPARSONS LIMITED	Primary sector	25.10	28.24	22.21	23.81	37.86			
16. X 🔲 🧭 TOLL HOLDINGS LIMITED	Transport	3.98	4.85	5.48	6.25	6.02			
17. X 🔲 🧭 DOWNER EDI LIMITED	Other services	3.13	3.70	3.60	5.59	6.87			
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This screen will appear after we click **Export**:

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O The unmarked companies
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Say, keep the parameters as they are. The most important is we select an Excel file (*.xls) as a selected format. We can change the name of file if we wish. Click **OK**.

Then, well, be patient....

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There are two worksheets. The first worksheet, as shown above, is named *Search strategy*. This describes the strategy we set to decide our sample. The second worksheet contains the most important thing, i.e. the results.

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1	BHP BILLITON LIMITED	ByD major sector Metals & metal products	2012	2011		2010	2009	2008	2007	2012			
2 2	BIO TINTO LIMITED	Metals & metal products	66.01	60.30		85.47	74.89	38.00	133.95	-721,000			
4 3.	VESFARMERS LIMITED	Chemicals, rubber, plastics, non-metallic products	30.28	32.25		29.01	22.93	37.77	46.30	-1,909,000			
5 4.	VOOLVORTHS LIMITED	Wholesale & retail trade	26.38	27.75		27.02	26.36	24.45	27.60	-1,549,300			
6	CALTEX AUSTRALIA LIMITED	Chemicals, rubber, plastics, non-metallic products	19.21	11.77		14.37	9.30	7.19	19.37	-108,000			
7 6.	TELSTRA CORPORATION LIMITED	Post & telecommunications	3.69	2.89		3.25	3.39	4.24	4.59	-3,475,000			
8 7.	LEIGHTON HOLDINGS LIMITED	Construction	17.88	19.04		28.95 23.50		50.85	41.25	-269,700			
9 8.	QANTAS AIRWAYS LIMITED	Transport	108	1.84		2.20	2.01	3.04	5.60	n.a.			
10 8.	URIGIN ENERGY LIMITED	Primary sector	12.20	15.79		14.94	14.64	16.12	3.34 E 34	-545,000			
11 10.	AMCOR LIMITED	Wholes are & recall trade	3.36	4.06		9.00	4.10	9.42	7.47	446 600			
12 12	LEND LEASE GROUP	Other services	7.20	8.97		7.33	4.00 D.à	0.05	0.4	-217.500			
1.4 13.	AGL ENERGY LIMITED	Gas. Water, Electricitu	14.77	14.65		14.70	13.45	14.30	15.17	-309,700			
15 14.	FORTESCUE METAL GROUP	Metals & metal products	4.90	6.35		4.12	3.79	11.90	3.38	-265,000			
16 15.	VORLEYPARSONS LIMITED	Primary sector	25.10	28.24		22.21	23.81	37.86	34.00	-223,600			
17 16.	TOLL HOLDINGS LIMITED	Transport	3.98	4.85		5.48	6.25	6.02	14.49	-179,300			
18 17.	DOWNER EDI LIMITED	Other services	3.13	3.70		3.60	5.59	6.87	7.36	0			
19 18.	VOODSIDE PETROLEUM LIMITED	Primary sector	33.88	30.62		42.56	47.20	36.70	50.39	-1,072,000			
20 19.	BLUESCOPE STEEL LIMITED	Metals & metal products	1.80	7.23		12.60	15.18	68.04	62.04	0			
21 20.	SIMS METAL MANAGEMENT	Metals & metal products	9.61	17.65		17.11	26.51	41.69	26.50	-41,000			
22	ORICA LIMITED	Chemicals, rubber, plastics, non-metallic products	24.87	23.48		25.71	23.50	20.95	30.10	-137,900			
23 22.	ABBIUM LIMITED	Metals & metal products	0.87	1.85		2.98	2.58	7.44	6.43	-80,700			
24 23.	BRAMBLES LIMITED	Fransport	6.16 10.45	1.22		0.46	0.36	8.73	12.18	-410,600			
25 24.	COLA-COLA AMATIL LIMITED	Chemicals where plastics non-metallic	13.40	22.06		22.60	11.53	3.13	3.40	-403,300			
26	OUT CHAILED	products	33.42	33.00		02.00	32.10	30.70	11.4.				
26.	BORAL LIMITED	Chemicals, rubber, plastics, non-metallic products	2.95	4.40		4.82	4.07	5.65	8.77	-82,400			
28 27.	SEVEN GROUP HOLDINGS LIMITED	Other services	7.74	9.63		5.74	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-116,816 💌			
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The *Results* worksheet is shown below:

This final result does not exactly have the same format as we set at the beginning (see below), but it exactly contains the data we need.

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Some final notes:

- 1. We will see that many variables contain *n.a.*, which means 'not available'
- 2. Orbis only provides the last 10 years of data. Orisis database (a sister/brother of Orbis) is design to handle data more than 10 years, but VU does not subscribe Orisis.
- 3. We can utilize **Datastream Professional** available at VU library to download data more than 10 years.

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1719 1718.	CRADLE RESOURCES LIMITED	Metals & metal products		0.13	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0	
¹ 719. 1720	CASSINI RESOURCES LIMITED	Chemicals, rubber, plastics, non-metallic products		0.13	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0	
1720. 1721	FIRESTRIKE RESOURCES LIMITED	Chemicals, rubber, plastics, non-metallic products		0.07	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0	
1722 1721	CREST MINERALS LIMITED	Metals & metal products		0.17	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0	
1723 1722.	BORA BORA RESOURCES LIMITED	Metals & metal products		0.20	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0	
1724 1723.	PURA VIDA ENERGY NL	Primary sector		0.28	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	
1725 1724.	SUNBIRD ENERGY LTD	Primary sector		0.18	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	
1726 1725.	ESTRELLA RESOURCES LIMITED	Metals & metal products		0.18	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	
1726.	MINREX RESOURCES NL	Chemicals, rubber, plastics, non-metallic		0.14	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0	
1727	DOME COLD MINES LTD	Maria 2 maria da de										
1728 1727	AMPACCAPOD OIL AND CAC	Primerals of metal products		11.4.	it.a.		II.a.	it.a.	it.a.	11.d.	ita.	
1729 1720.	INDUS COAL LIMITED	Primary sector		0.14	n.a.		H.a.	h.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	
1730 1723	PULLAPULLING COLD LIMITED	Matula 2. metal are dusts		0.00	1.4.		11.a.	i.a.	11.4.	11.4.		
1731 1730.	TARIIGA GOLD LIMITED	Metals & metal products		0.08	na.		11.a.	11.4.	1.4.	11.4.	0	
1732 1732	ATBUM COAL NI	Primate sector	_	0.10	0.0		0.4	0.4	0.4	0.0	0	
1733		Other services		0.2	0.3		0.3	n.a.	0.3	0.3	0	
1734	GROUP LIMITED	our series		10.00	11.4.			The second	104		· ·	
1735 1734.	DACIAN GOLD LIMITED	Metals & metal products		n.a.	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0	
1736 1735.	PERPETUAL RESOURCES LIMITED	Primary sector		n.a.	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0	
1737 1736.	PARINGA RESOURCES LTD	Metals & metal products		n.a.	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0	
1738 1737.	FORTUNIS RESOURCES LIMITED	Metals & metal products		n.a.	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	
1739 1738.	MANDALONG RESOURCES	Metals & metal products		n.a.	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	
¹ 739. 1740	MAGNOLIA RESOURCES LIMITED	Chemicals, rubber, plastics, non-metallic products		n.a.	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	
1741 1740.	VINDVARD RESOURCES LIMITED	Metals & metal products		n.a.	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	
1742 1741	ENTERPRISE URANIUM LIMITED	Metals & metal products		n.a.	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	
1743 1742.	COTT OIL AND GAS LIMITED	Primary sector		n.a.	D.A.	_	0.8	D.A.	D.A.	0.8	0	
1744 1743.	SANTANA MINERALS LIMITED	Metals & metal products		n.a.	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a. 🗐	
1745 1744.	INVESTA OFFICE FUND	Other services		2.71	2.58		2.32	1.84	4.60	7.00	-109,500	
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Hopefully this guide is helpful.

Good luck.