

Te Whatu Ora

Health New Zealand

Capital, Coast and Hutt Valley

Data Literacy

Context is Everything

15/08/2022

What is data literacy?

What is data?

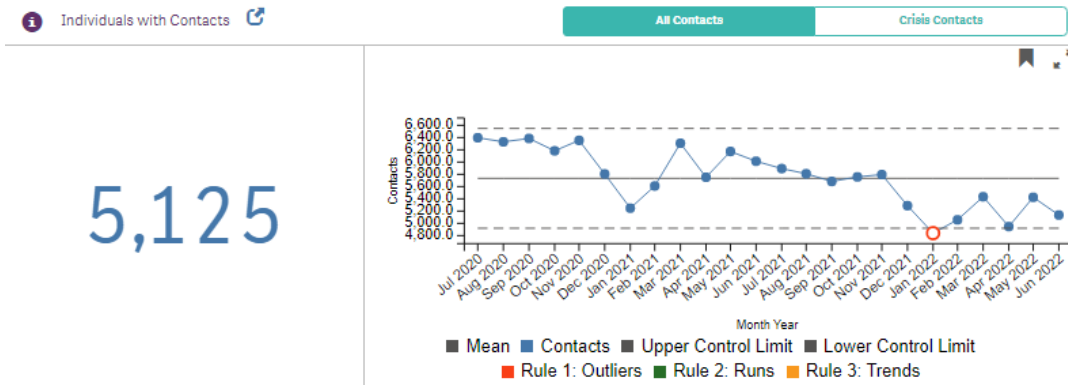
What is literacy?

What is data literacy?

- What is the data we want people to be literate in?
- How literate do we want people to be?
- What definition of data literacy are we going to adopt?

Data as text

Text is anything that seeks to convey meaning



- Words
- Pictures
- Poems
- Stories
- Songs
- Music
- Film
- Data visualisations

Data authors and data readers

Meaning is created through the interaction of a text author and a text reader

The interaction is performed through the text

- Text authors
 - Writers
 - Composers
 - Dramaturgists
 - Data analysts
- Text readers
 - Readers
 - Listeners
 - Watchers
 - Decision makers

Construction of meanings

Meaning is constructed

Same text

+ same author

+ different readers

= different meanings

- Covid numbers (1 text) come from Ministry of Health (1 author)
- Multiple readers result in different meanings
 - Yes I believe it
 - I don't believe it

Context and meaning construction

**Context influences meaning
but what is context?**

**Contexts influence authors,
readers and the text itself, so
meaning is affected by context**

And context can be a choice

- Life experience
- Cultural experience
- Belief system
- Political system
- Communications media
- Theoretical approaches
- Scope
- Bias
- Geography/space
- Time

Closing the ‘meaning gap’

It's impossible to control meaning but we can try to reduce variation 😊

- Standardise the text
- Make definitions accessible
- Explain difficult data concepts and make the explanation accessible
- Use good design techniques
- Teach data visualisation
- Explain why data meanings can be different
- Explain how different experiences impact meaning, and respect that
- Improve competencies

Boring but practical examples

