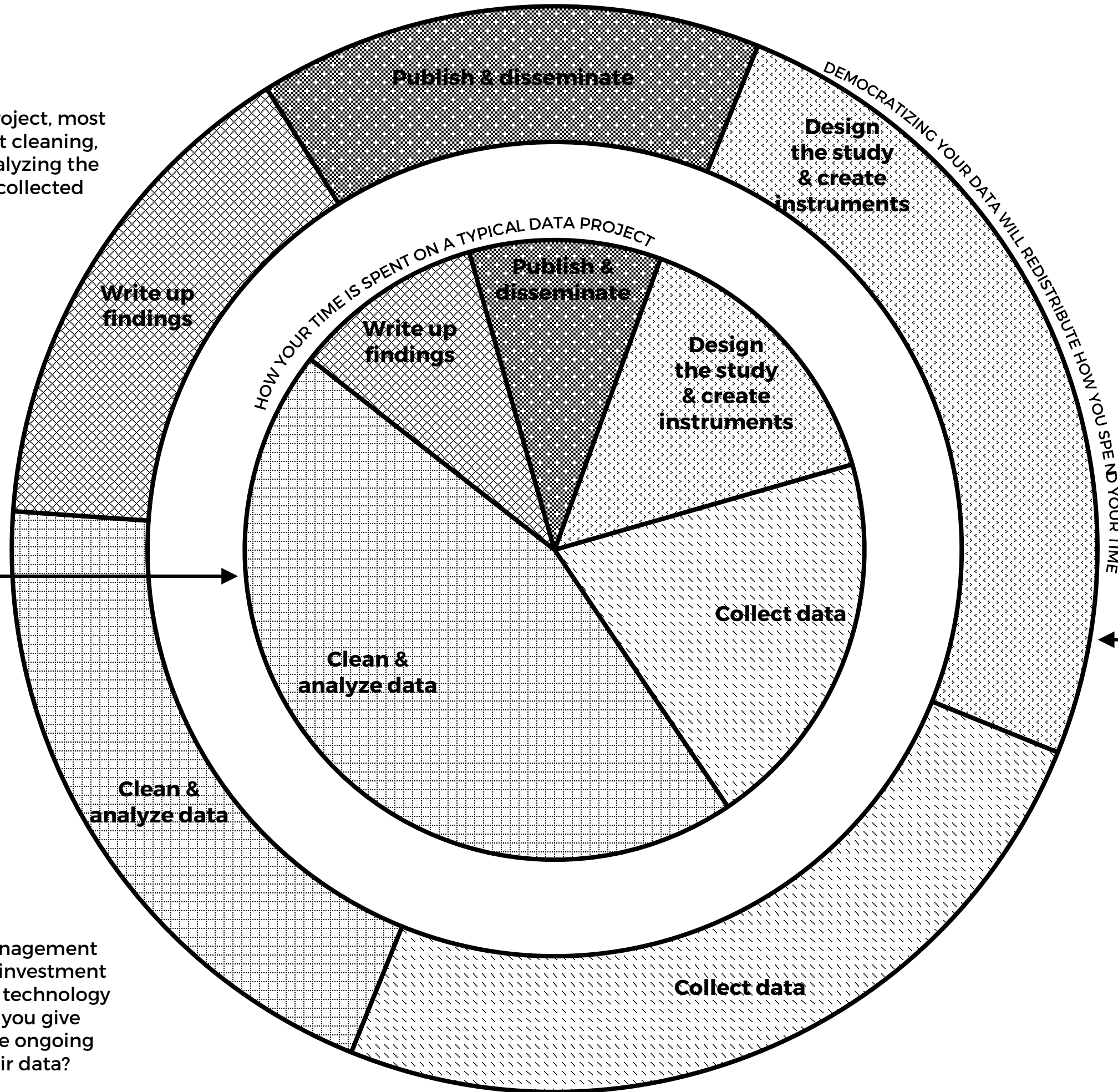


On a typical data project, most of your time is spent cleaning, structuring, and analyzing the data after it's been collected (*center pie chart*).



Democratizing your data requires investing more time in bringing people into all other phases of the project (*outer donut chart*).

THE UPSHOT:
You'll spend more time at the beginning, designing the study, creating instruments, and collecting data. This will likely save time on cleaning and making meaning with the data later.

But the real payoff is a better study with data and findings that respond to the needs and concerns of people and their communities.

It's their data. Don't they deserve a voice in who uses it and how? Shouldn't they benefit from sharing it with you?

LEVEL UP!
Long-term data management requires additional investment in both human and technology resources. How can you give people a voice in the ongoing maintenance of their data?

1. Engage communities at every step of data collection

Get input and advice from the people whose data you want when you

- Choose what data to collect
- Select where and how to collect the data
- Determine where and how the data will be stored
- Decide how you'll structure your research questions
- Design the data collection process

Your study began with questions you want to ask. Before you begin collecting data, though, ask your sources what questions they want answered.

DEMOCRATIZE YOUR DATA

A GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WHO COLLECT DATA ABOUT PEOPLE

by Bronwyn Mauldin



artsdatathon.org

3. Don't collect data you won't use

Review how you use the data you collect.

Do you

- Analyze the data?
- Use the findings to make decisions and take action?
- Publish the data or findings?

If you can't answer "yes" to at least one of those questions for every piece of data you request, consider whether you should collect it at all.

4. Make your data analysis participatory

Maybe they don't have formal data analysis skills, but the people whose data you want will have ideas for how you should use it. Ask them what questions your analysis should answer – and what it shouldn't.

If you're going to publish the data itself, crowd-source keywords that will make your data easier for people to search and find, in their words, not yours.

5. Ask for feedback on your analysis

Share your findings and how you came to your conclusions with the people whose data you used. Ask them what your findings mean to them. Use their insights to dig deeper and understand more fully.

If your findings don't make sense to the people whose data you collected, re-think your findings and how you explained them.

6. Use qualitative data to deepen understanding

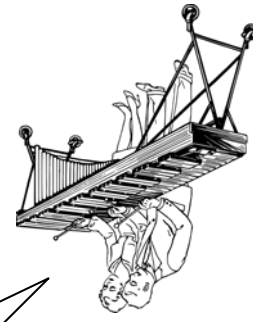
"Data" isn't a synonym for "numbers."

The people you collect data about are whole human beings, more than the sum of their component parts. Their opinions are complex and situational, and can't be predicted by their demographic makeup or any other quantitative measure.

Gather information on their perspectives using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Treat your data sources as the unique, complex individuals they are.

*Nothing about us without us.

Nihil de nobis, sine nobis*



or anyone, really, who collects data from or about people

- Public arts agencies
- Arts nonprofits
- Arts educators
- Artists

A guide for

Ask people to tell you how their data has been used in the past, their concerns for how your data collection could harm them, and hopes for how it could help.

Use plain language, not data geek jargon. Translate into all relevant languages. Make the explanations available in writing too.

If there are legal or regulatory reasons why you're collecting the data or limits to what you can and cannot do with their data, explain them.

Tell people what data you're collecting, why you're collecting it, what you'll use it for, and how it will be stored.

then listen

2. Explain everything -

