



Create a Source Spreadsheet

Some journalists suggest you start a source database, or contact list, early on in your beat assignment or when you begin covering on a new area. This tool will make it less time-consuming to maintain a list; and it's easy to update. You might get story ideas from such a database as well.

Make sure you include all necessary contact information for sources. When you get their information, remember to tell them what it's for and that you'll be contacting them frequently for information. Follow through with this statement.

Create separate categories within this spreadsheet. For instance, if you have the traffic beat, you may want to note where people live so you can pinpoint sources you want to contact about specific issues.

Starter Source List: Download a starter spreadsheet from the [Virtual Communities](#) page now to start keeping track of your sources. Add to it during each story you work on and customize it with your own categories.