

# A Datathon Aims to Improve Access to the Arts in Los Angeles

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2017 Arts Access Datathon. (Photo by Alexia Lewis)

As several recent information breaches — from Wikileaks to Facebook — have shown, access to data has become one of the defining characteristics of life in the 21st century. Depending on who controls it, data can democratize and empower, or wreak havoc on millions of people across the globe.

Organized by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, the first Los Angeles Arts Datathon was held a year ago, with the goal of bringing together a diverse group of participants — artists, arts administrators, community advocates, educators, and students — to explore “how data can be used to improve access to the arts for all ten million residents of Los Angeles County.” The idea is similar to a hackathon, though not all participants need to have extensive technical knowledge.

Last year datasets ranged from databases of county arts grants and community art centers, to the Western States Arts Federation’s list of creative occupations in Los Angeles County. At the end of the day-long program, participants that had been divided into various working groups presented final projects that took the form of campaigns, reports, or policies, each addressing

a different aspect of increasing access to the arts via data.

The theme of [this Friday's program](#) is collections, with a focus on those in the archives of governmental agencies, cultural organizations, libraries, and elsewhere. Working groups will be organized around [eight different "tracks"](#), including a [Civic Art Wiki Edit-a-Thon](#) focused primarily on Los Angeles County's Civic Art Collection; a Los Angeles [Mural Data Archive](#); and a [tagging system for historical images](#), among others. Those interested in participating are asked to [register](#) and select their top three tracks, one of which they will be assigned to. At the end of the day, each team will present their reports to the entire group, offering constructive proposals to harness the full potential of art-related data.

**When:** Friday, April 27, 9am–5pm

**Where:** Bob Hope Patriotic Hall (1816 S Figueroa St., Downtown, Los Angeles)

*More info at [Arts Datathon](#).*