Orbis Ownership data: Get started with financial data (EDSC)

The UL offers several financial databases that provide Ownership data:

- **ThomsonOne (T1)**: data available company by company from 1997 to the present, global coverage.
- **Orbis**: Ownership data available from 2000 to the present, Global coverage.
- **Bloomberg**: Ownership data available from 1997 to the present, Global coverage.
- **WRDS**: Thomson Reuters – Institutional (13f) Holdings – s34 + Mutual Fund Holdings (s12), Coverage NYSE, ASE, Nasdaq, Toronto and Montreal common stocks from 1978 onwards.

This manual will focus on the Orbis database.

**Information on Orbis:**
Orbis is provided by Bureau van Dijk and contains data for 79 million public and private companies worldwide over the last 10 years. Bureau van Dijk collects this data from local sources, for example: data of Dutch companies is taken from the Chamber of Commerce. This annual report data is processed by Bureau van Dijk, so that companies of different countries can be compared (this is called the Global Format).

You find the link to Orbis in the list of financial databases. To get access to Orbis from home, you need a VPN-connection or use EZ proxy. Our licence is limited to 8 simultaneous users.

See for off-campus access:
https://service.ubib.eur.nl/training_support/#/course/432?_k=nf5arx

**Available identifiers**: BVD ID number (BVD products only), Ticker symbol, ISIN number, and (Inter)National & IP identification numbers.

**Settings**: Under Settings in the upper right corner you can adjust the settings for Ownership (the definition of the ultimate owner) or (what type of shareholder do you want to consider as ultimate owner).

**Support**
Under Help in the upper right corner you can find the Ownership Guide. The Quick Tour is useful to get to know Orbis.

**Getting your data**
Ownership data is available from 2000 to the present in Orbis.
To get your Ownership data you need to go through three steps. A similar approach can be used to get data on CEOs (board data) and financials (annual report data).
In the first step you need to create your search query. This means that you apply filters to all companies in Orbis by setting criteria. For example you might be interested in Ownership data in a specific country or industry. Another possibility is that you already have companies from another database (for example you have all acquirers from deals you collected in Zephyr). Both approaches will be discussed.

In the second step you can create your report that means you can get information on the selected companies and individuals, such as the Global Ultimate Owner (GUO), Shareholders, direct- and total ownership, private equity ownership etc.

In the final step you can export your data.

**Step 1: Setting the criteria**

In this first step we are going to set the criteria to create a list of companies.

**An example:** We want to make a list of family businesses or individuals as the ultimate owner, public, active in western-europe.

To limit to European companies, you choose Location > World region/Country/Region in country. In the following screen select the regions of interest by clicking on the check-box.

You can also select the separate countries. Now click on OK.

Orbis automatically excludes inactive companies from the search strategy. However it includes companies with “unknown situations”. To exclude companies with unknown situations or to include inactive companies you can go to Status. Do note that these statuses are based on the most recent information.

Next we want to add a search criterion to keep only those firms that have a family or individual as ultimate owner. Go to Ownership data > Companies owned by an ultimate owner > Characteristics of their ultimate owner. Now you can select as type “One or more named individuals or families”. You also can add more selection criteria here like size of the company by operating revenue or employees etc. or immediately the country of region.

Finally to select public companies you have to click Stock data > Listed/unlisted companies. Here you can mark Publicly listed companies.

Now click on View list of Results.
Tip: With the search criterion ‘Identification Numbers’ you can upload lists with identifiers. You can copy a list of these codes from Excel and paste them. The codes must be separated by a comma or start on a new line. Another way is to upload the list directly via ‘load from disk’. Allowed formats are .list, .xlsx(s), and .txt.

Step 2: Requesting data
In this step we are going to select the data/variables that we want to collect from the companies/individuals. Orbis always provides a default list of items. However in most cases you will want to add (or delete) some variables. To adjust this list click on Columns. In this screen you can choose your variables of interest by clicking on the check-boxes. You can search for your variables by exploring the (sub)folders or by using the search box.

When you click on “modify” behind a variable a pop-up appears. In the pop-up for the variable “Shareholder Name or Direct” for example you can choose for “Archived data” and select the history of shareholders direct and total %. In this case you can go back in history up until the year 2000.
After you have selected all variables of interest click on the OK button.

**Tip:** If you want to add information about public companies from other databases: add as many identifiers as possible to your list, like ISIN Number, SEDOL Number and Ticker Symbol. You can find these identifiers under Identification numbers.

**Step 3: Exporting your list**

To export your data click on **Export**.
Choose your format and name for your file. Finally click on 'OK'.

Sometimes you will get a notification that your export cannot be immediately processed, but you can get a notification by e-mail. Provide your e-mail address and Zephyr will send you the file.

**Note:** When exporting your reports you can encounter a limitation set by Orbis. The only way to work around this issue is by splitting your report into several parts. For example you can choose to download the companies by country or you can decide to split your variables over multiple downloads.
Tip: If you are going to work with STATA you can add field codes, which can be used as variable names. Go to Settings > Lists > Settings and click on the check box to show field codes.

Saving and Uploading
In Orbis you can save your search strategy to your drive. Click on the save button above the search strategy then in the pop-up menu enter a name for your strategy and click on the save button to the left. This will allow you to download the search strategy to your drive. To load your search strategy go to ‘Saved searches’ and click on ‘Load from disk’.

Similar to saving your search query you can save your selected variables in a so-called list file. In the screen where you select your variables you can name your list in the bottom right box. To the left of it you can again download your list to your drive. To upload a previous created list you must click on ‘Load from disk’ on the left-hand side of the screen.

Saving and uploading previously created files is especially useful when you have to redo earlier work or when you want to do separate downloads for each country but with the same variables.

Reports in Orbis
From the results list you can click on the name of a company to get more information about that company. This information is put into reports, like Contact Information, Industry/Activities (with the SIC-codes), Key Financials, Current boards & management and Current subsidiaries.

At the right side of the screen you can open other reports, like Financial Data > Cash Flow Statement or Ownership Data > Current Shareholders. These are always standard reports: in most cases you can’t adjust them. You can make your own reports under Via Report Format > New Format, but you can just select a ‘block’ with data (for example just ratio’s, you can’t select specific ratio’s). For financial ratio’s it might be easier to add the requested items to the list of companies (see chapter: Making a list of companies).

You can download a report: Click the button Export at the top of the page in the blue bar. If you export reports of multiple companies, then each company will get its own sheet in the Excel-file. You can export up to 50 reports in one download.