

# Categories

Categories are a big part of your map's success.

Think of Library of Congress and Dewey classification systems for libraries. Both of these focus on "keywords" and "subject headings".

When creating your categories, consider that less is sometimes more. Information overload via categories may not help your audience share information with you. What is the map mandate? Consider the primary purposes of the categories:

- Collecting Information (your mandate)
- Your Audience sharing information in real-time (their life)
  - what is realistic to expect them to share? Imagine your "reporter" is on a bicycle with their family. They are trying to not spill the groceries in the basket, but want to share a photo. Will they have time to consider 10 or more categories?

## Why is categorization so important and how to do it?

Categorization of incoming information is one of the ways (besides geo-tagging and translation) to give meaning to unstructured data coming from the people and make such information "actionable." It is very important to have common understanding of what these categories mean and how to use them

This list of categories was designed with the need to effectively fulfill two different requirements:

1. To give the people who are submitting reports (as well as to volunteers who are processing the reports) an easy to understand terminology that will enable quick categorization of incoming data even without specific knowledge and expertise in the field of election monitoring.
2. To provide categorization that reflects the needs and systems of mappers in order to provide them with data that can be useful for their project.

Please remember that when selecting a category that the need you that you are highlighting should be explicitly stated in the report or clearly deducible from the information provided.

- Please try to minimize assumptions in choosing which categories to assign to a report
- Please choose as few categories as possible.

Ask yourself:

Can you make the categories simple, then export the data to really do you analysis and add the details into other viz tools or blog posts?

Make the Category Definitions available:

Make it easy for people to learn about the categories and how to provide you with valuable information. Having the definitions is very important. Making them available on the site as a tab or in the FAQs is good idea. See [Uchaguzi Categories](#) as a template example.

Using the Categories:

When working on a map project, you may need teach your audience and your mapping team the following:

1. Select one or more appropriate categories, however, try to keep the number of assigned categories to one report to a minimum.
2. If you cannot find an appropriate subcategory, select "Other." Will we be auditing these categories later.
3. If you repeatedly process messages that do not fit any of the categories and subcategories, please let one of the co-leads know in the Skype channel and we'll have the appropriate people decide how to proceed.

Some Resources:

[Categorization: Sometimes Less is More](#) (Ushahidi Blog article by Jessica Heinzelman).

[Humans process information in Chunks](#) (wiki article)