How do I reference data that aren’t fields on a form?

Smart Variables are variables that allow you to reference metadata (i.e. information other than data fields). This includes an event, repeat instance, data access group, or user.

In this tutorial, we will highlight a few of the most popular smart variables. We suggest that you review the available smart variables to familiarize yourself with design options.

A complete list of Smart Variables, can be found in the Designer mode by:

1. Clicking on the ‘Smart Variables’ button in the Project Setup menu option

2. Clicking Add New Field page in the Online Designer page.
Popular Smart Variables include:

1. **If you are using Data Access Groups:**
   a. **[record-dag-name]**: The Data Access Group (DAG) to which the record is assigned.

   Example: Can be used to create branching logic based on DAG [record-dag-name]='bpt'

   **Note:** Similar options include `record-dag-id` or `record-dag-label`.

2. **If you want to display information collected during a previous event:**
   a. **[previous-event-name]**: Specifies information from the prior event.

   Example: Set the default value of a field to be the value recorded in the previous event. @DEFAULT=’[previous-event-name][value]’

   **Note:** This can be used as stand-alone or prepended to a field variable. When using this as a stand-alone variable, it will always return the event that occurs immediately before the current event, whereas if it is prepended to another variable, it will instead return the closest previous event for which the field’s instrument has been designated, which might be different than the event that occurs directly before the current event.

   **Note:** Similar options include `first-event-name` or `last-event-name`.
3. If you want to display information collected during a previous repeat event:
   a. **[previous-instance]**: Specifies information from the prior instance of a repeating form.

   Example: Display data from the previous instance of a repeating form. [bp][previous-instance]

   ![Example Image]

   **Note**: Similar options include **first-instance**.

4. If you want to capture data entry users:
   a. **[user-fullname]**: Current REDCap user, full name.

   Example: Capture users who are performing tasks in real-time while doing data entry.

   ![Example Image]

   **Note**: Similar options include **user-name, user-email, user-dag-name, and user-dag-label**.