

Building The Open Internet of Agents

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Every decade, the United States conducts one of its most important exercises in democracy: the Census. This seemingly routine headcount drives over **\$2.8 trillion in federal funding** annually through 353 federal programs—from schools and hospitals to roads and disaster relief. The census isn't just about counting people; it's about understanding the economic, social, and infrastructure needs of our society to ensure resources flow where they're most needed.

But we're approaching a fundamental shift that will dwarf the complexity of counting 330 million Americans. **Within the next decade, we'll need to coordinate not just billions of humans, but tens of billions of AI agents acting on their behalf.** Welcome to the era of the Agentic Census.

1. From Human Census to Agentic Census

The traditional census captures a snapshot every ten years. It tells us how many people live where, their ages, occupations, and economic status. This data becomes the foundation for everything from congressional representation to Medicaid funding formulas to small business loan allocations. Now imagine that same foundational role—but for an economy where AI agents handle everything from scheduling medical appointments to negotiating supply contracts to coordinating disaster response. Just as we need to know where people live and work, we'll need a comprehensive understanding of the agent ecosystem powering our society.

Traditional Census Measures	Agentic Census Will Track
Population by location	Agent density by capability
Age and demographic distribution	Agent specialization networks
Employment and income levels	Economic value flows through agents
Housing and infrastructure needs	Computational infrastructure demands
Social mobility patterns	Agent-human collaboration patterns

But here's the fundamental challenge: Unlike the traditional census, which counts static entities once a decade, the Agentic Census must track dynamic entities that change capabilities, form networks, and create value in real-time. This requires entirely new infrastructure—not just for measurement, but for coordination itself.

2. The NANDA Registry: Building the Foundation for Real-Time Coordination

The traditional census works because we have addresses—stable, hierarchical identifiers that let us find and count people systematically. But agents don't live at fixed addresses. They exist in networks, with capabilities that shift based on context, availability, and learned behavior.

This is why Project NANDA had to start with infrastructure, not measurement. Just as the internet needed DNS before we could have web analytics, the Agentic Census needs agent addressing before we can have agent analytics.

NANDA Registry creates this foundation through four essential internet layers for agents:

Infrastructure Layer	Function	Enables
Namespace	Global identity system for agents	Verified agent identities (@medical-ai, @logistics-agent)
AgentFacts	Certification and capability directory	What each agent can do, verified credentials
Index	Observability and coordination tracking	Interaction traces for census-quality data
Distributed Protocols	Secure agent-to-agent communication	Agents can share context and coordinate tasks

This infrastructure enables agents to share context, interact securely, and log interaction traces—not private data, but coordination patterns that create census-quality intelligence about the digital economy.

This is the breakthrough: NANDA doesn't just enable agent coordination; it makes agent coordination *measurable* at population scale. Each interaction through the registry becomes a data point in the living Agentic Census.

Currently operational with thousands of agents and scaling to millions, people can experience this infrastructure today at join.projectnanda.org

2. Project Iceberg: The Agentic Census in Action

With NANDA Registry providing the coordination infrastructure, we can now build the Agentic Census. **Project Iceberg combines agent registry data with Large Population Model simulations to understand economic transformation as it happens.**

Project Iceberg demonstrates what becomes possible when you have agent coordination data at scale. Using snapshots from NANDA's growing agent network combined with population-scale economic modeling, it reveals the automation impact across all 50 states. The (ongoing) results are at iceberg.mit.edu:

State	Current Iceberg Index	Economic Value at Risk	Workers Affected
Washington	5.8%	\$15.6B	100K
Virginia	4.9%	\$13.2B	96K
North Carolina	4.5%	\$12.8B	116K
Colorado	4.2%	\$8.5B	69K
California	4.2%	\$57.3B	337K

This is the Agentic Census in action. Washington state can see exactly which sectors face automation pressure. California can identify 337K workers who need reskilling support. Every state gets actionable intelligence about their economic transformation—intelligence that's only possible because we built open infrastructure for agent coordination.

The key insight: Project Iceberg shows what transparent visibility looks like when states have access to agent coordination data. This intelligence exists because NANDA Registry tracks interaction patterns while preserving privacy—we see coordination flows, not private communications.

3. Why States Need Their Own Agentic Census

The question is straightforward: Should your state's economic intelligence come from infrastructure you control, or from private platforms that may or may not share what you need to know?

When agents coordinate critical services in your state—healthcare scheduling, logistics, emergency response—the coordination data becomes your economic intelligence. This data reveals which sectors need investment, which workers need support, and where infrastructure bottlenecks are creating problems.

State-Controlled Infrastructure	Private Platform Dependence
Complete economic visibility	Limited to what platforms share
Data-driven policy decisions	Policy decisions without full information
Attract businesses with superior infrastructure	Compete with incomplete intelligence
Respond quickly to economic changes	Wait for delayed, filtered reports

Project Iceberg demonstrates exactly what this intelligence looks like. The insights it provides—identifying 337K workers in California who need reskilling support, showing Washington's \$15.6B automation impact—exist because we built it on open infrastructure. **This is what your state gains when you control the coordination data.**

Building Your State's Digital Infrastructure

The foundation is ready. NANDA Registry is operational and scaling from thousands to millions of agents. Project Iceberg proves that combining agent registry data with economic modeling delivers actionable intelligence that traditional statistics cannot provide.

What your state needs to do is simple: Deploy public agent infrastructure that serves your economy rather than private shareholders. The technology works, the models are proven, and the benefits are clear.

States that build this infrastructure now will lead the digital economy with complete visibility into their agent ecosystems and real-time intelligence about economic transformation. This isn't about keeping up with technology—it's about maintaining the economic intelligence that effective governance requires.

The Open Internet of Agents starts with infrastructure that serves the public interest. Your state can either build it or depend on others to provide it.