CIVIC DIGITAL FELLOWSHIP

Building Data Visualization Products for the Annual Business Survey Program

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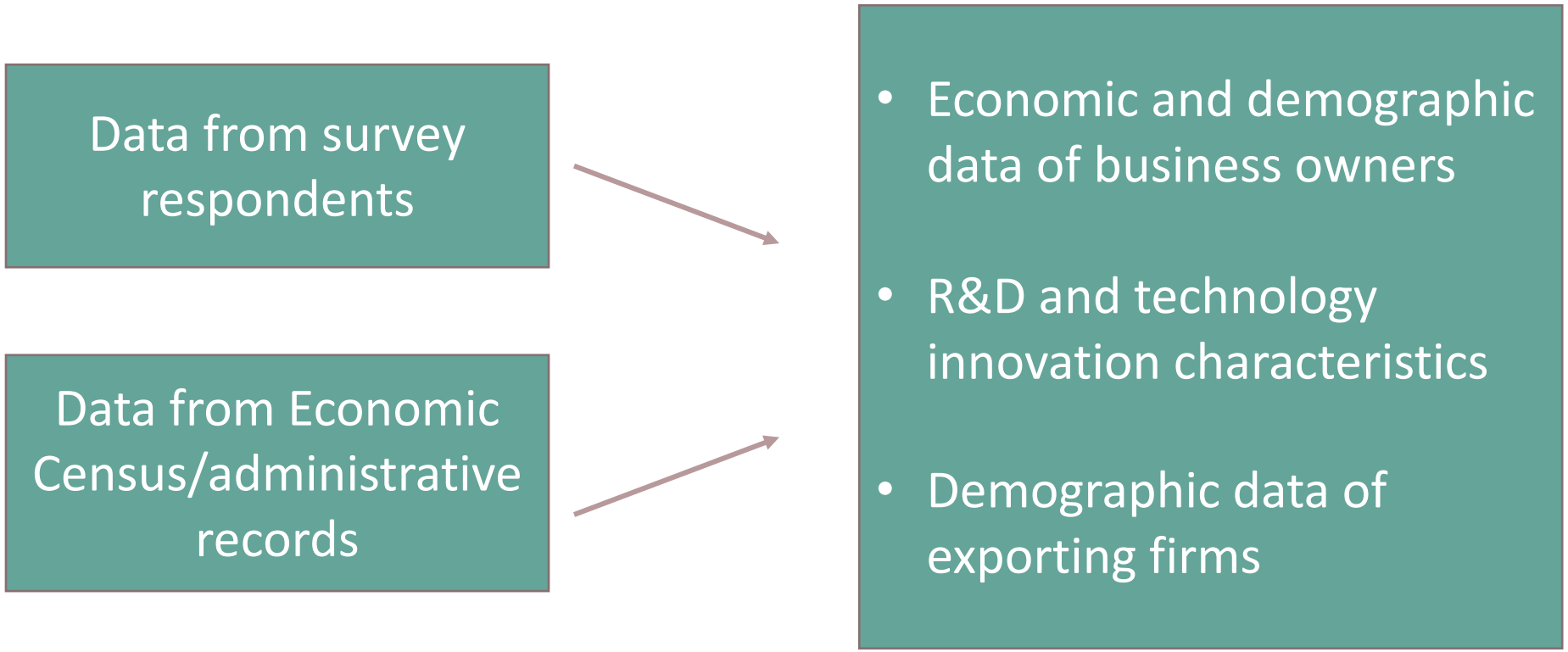
Economic Reimbursable Surveys Division

United States® Census Bureau

About the Annual Business Survey (ABS)



Co-sponsored by National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics within the National Science Foundation

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I work at the Chamber of Commerce in Columbus, Ohio. I am trying to understand the number of female and minority-owned businesses in our city.

-a common data user request

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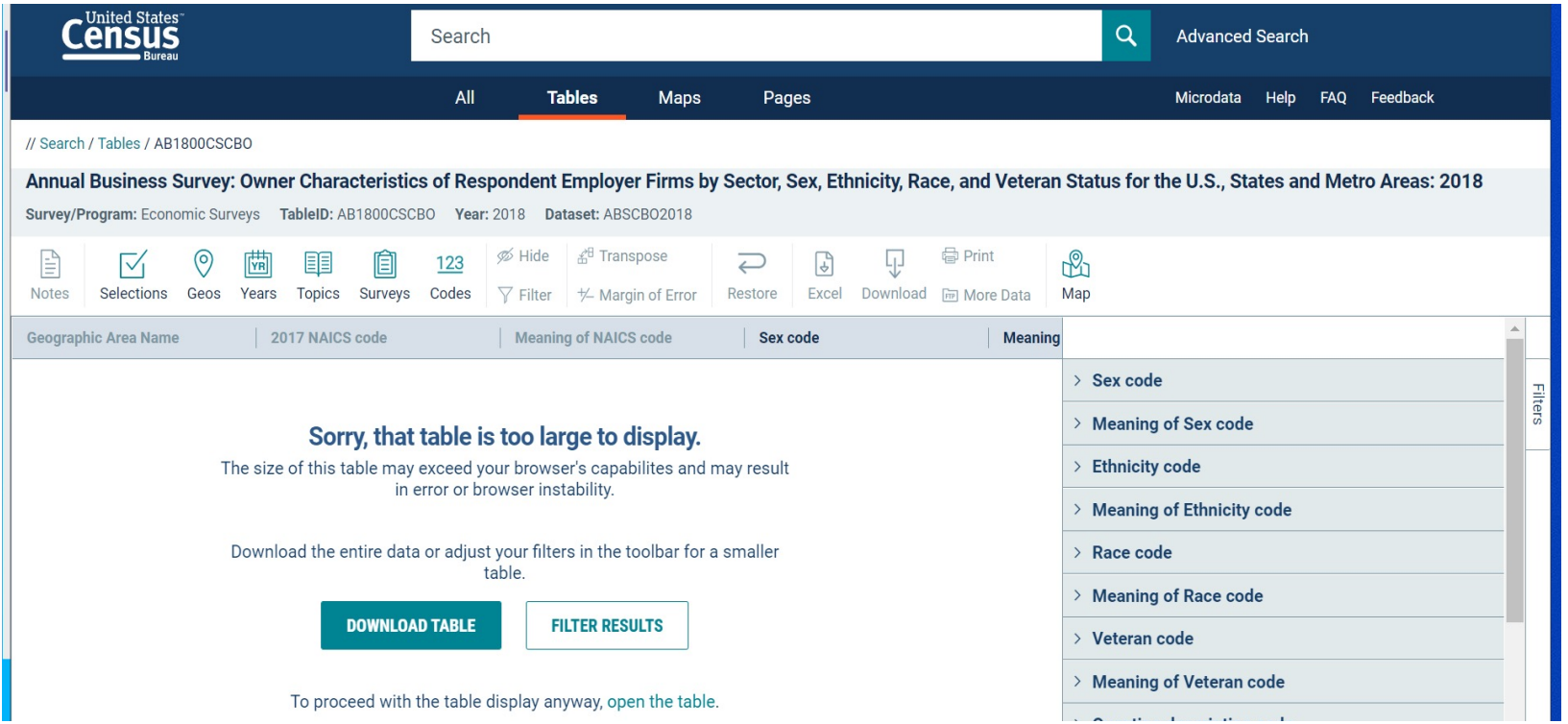
Understanding the Problem

Data User Question: How can I find the data I need?



Display message data users see when trying to open certain ABS tables

Size of Data Tables (row counts)	2017	2018
Company Summary Tables	1,596,807	252,880
Characteristics of Businesses	2,757,767	68,028
Characteristics of Business Owners	2,218,145	151,612
US Exporting Firms by Demographics	5,100	---

Context: some of the ABS tables are too large to open without filters

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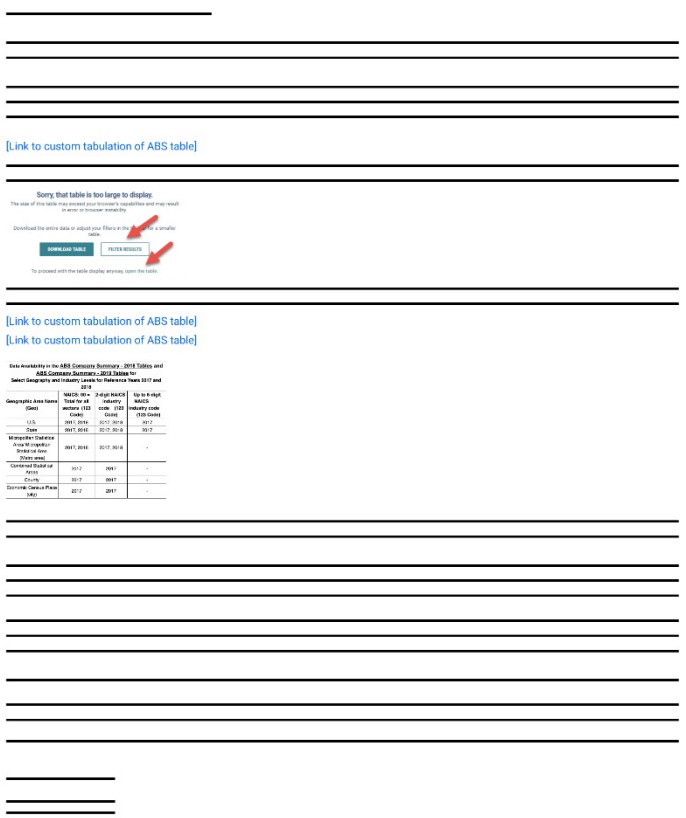
Data User Question: Why can't I find county data for 2018?

Data Available by Year

	Survey Years Ending in "2" or "7" (aligned with Economic Census)	2018	All other survey years
Geography Level Available	U.S., 50 States and District of Columbia, MSA, CSA, County, Economic Place, and Metropolitan Divisions	U.S., 50 States and District of Columbia, MSA	U.S., 50 States and District of Columbia, MSA
NAICS Code Available	2-6 digits	2 digits	3 digits

ABS is an exciting survey that's continuously offering more to its data users…but how can we make it clear what data is available in a given year?


[Link to custom tabulation of ABS table]

Sorry, that table is too large to display.

[Link to custom tabulation of ABS table]

[Link to custom tabulation of ABS table]

Example email response template from ABS team to data users

Project Objectives

Data users have **trouble accessing** the data they need.

ABS team needs to **spend time** explaining the different tables to data users.

ABS data is **underutilized.**

- Design and build a Data Explorer tool that displays high-level info about the demographics of employer firm owners and takes users to the data they need
- Envision and build exploratory visualization products for ABS data tables

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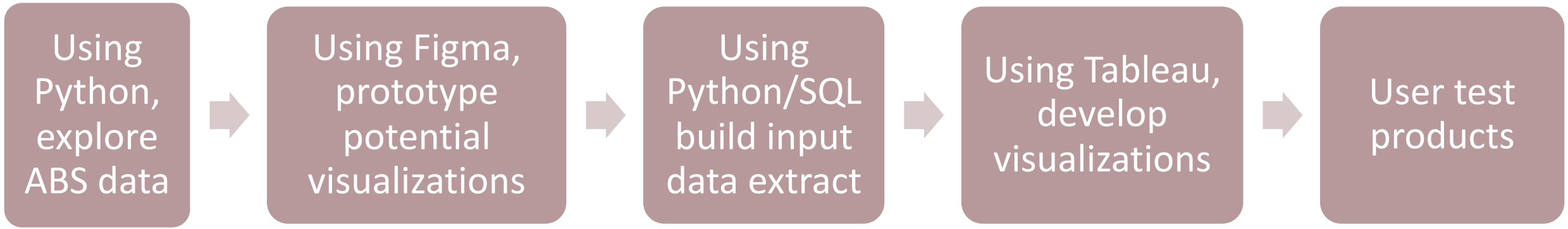
Methodology



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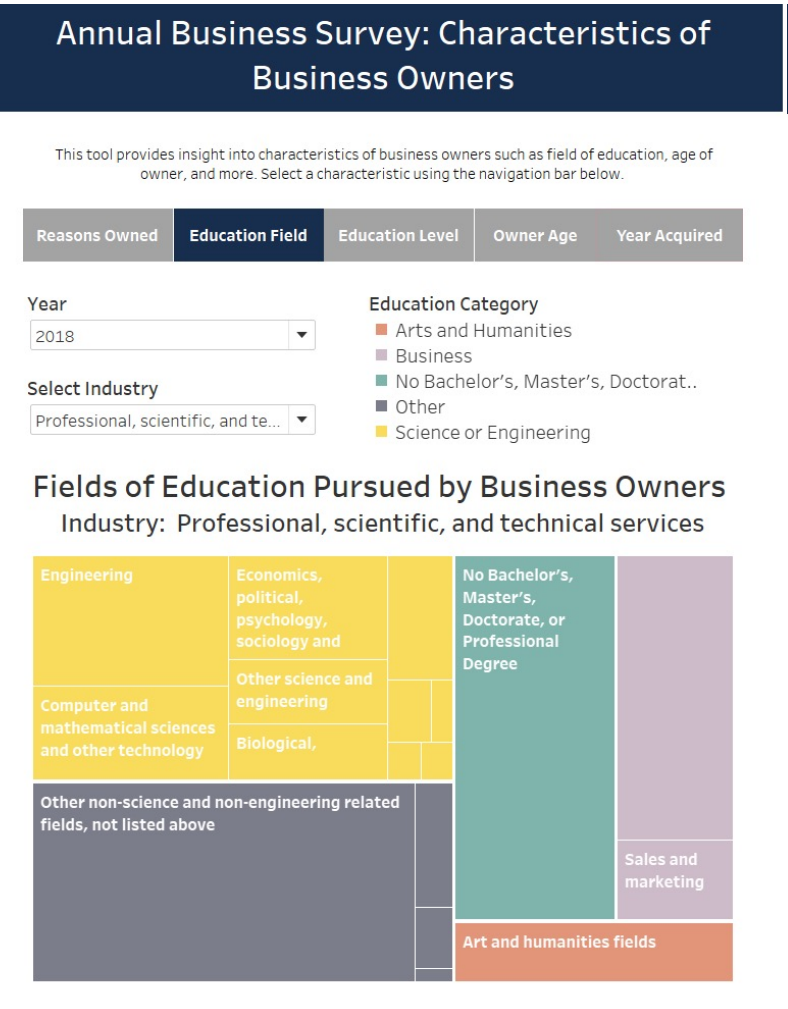
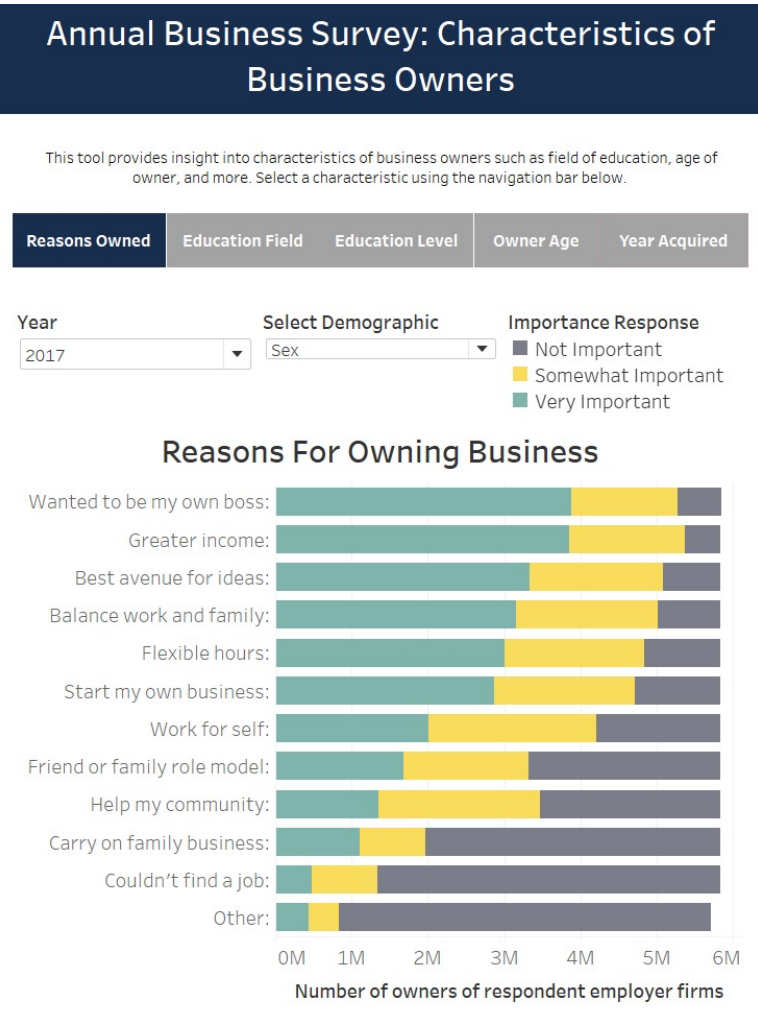
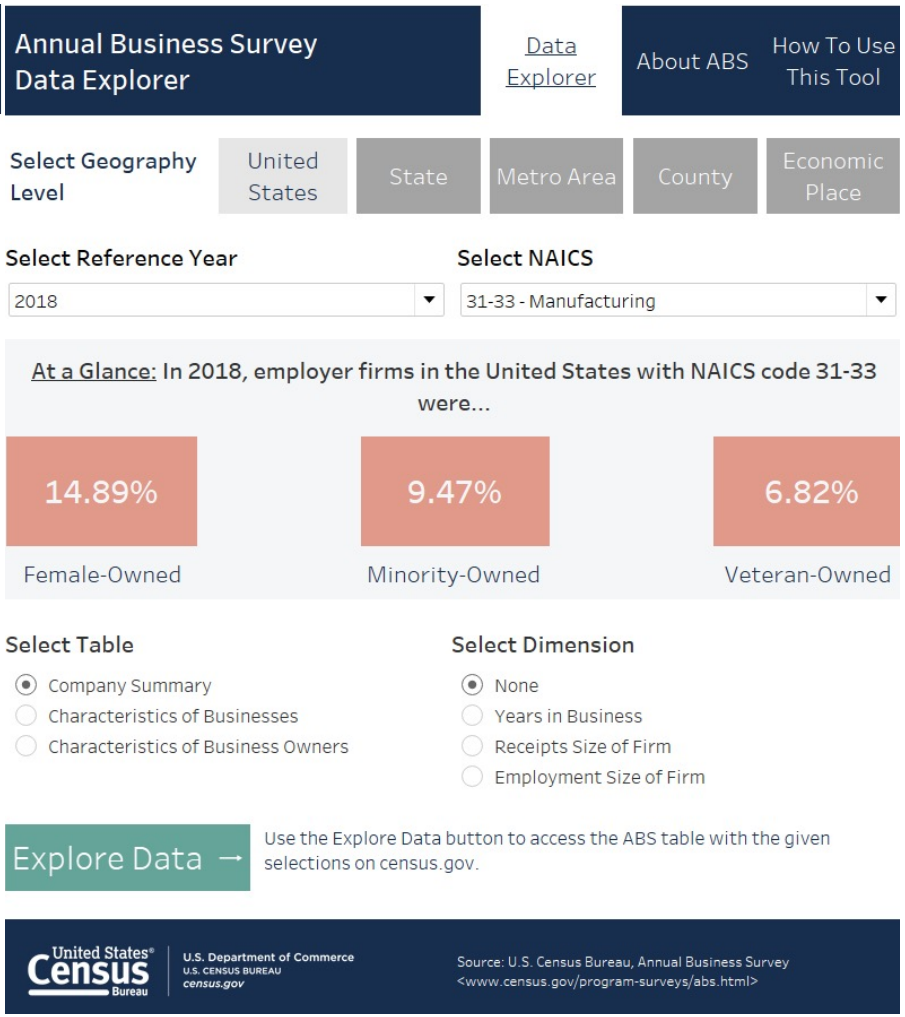
Sample Screenshots of Visualization Iterations







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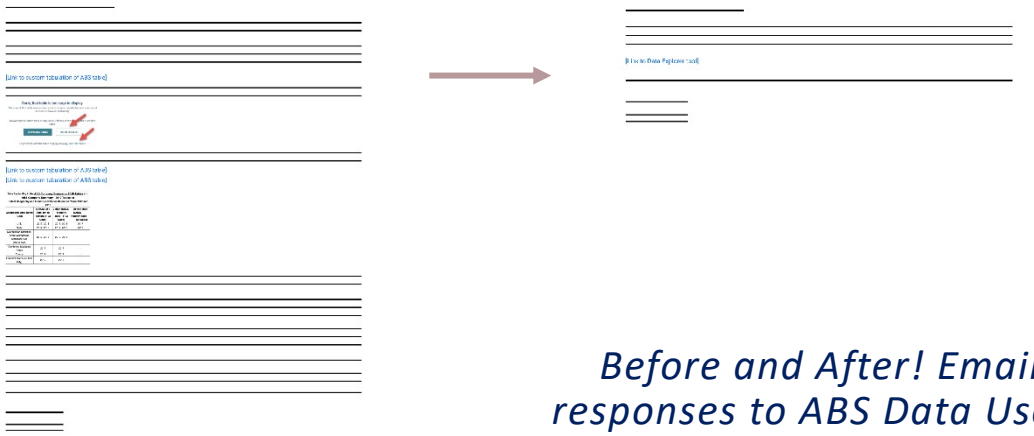
Benefits

- ✓ **Save time** for ABS team
- ✓ **Increase public engagement** with ABS data



Before and After! Email responses to ABS Data Users

Next Steps

How can the Census Bureau make it **easier** for the public to **engage** with its data?

When building data visualization products, how can we think about **scalability and collaboration** with other programs while still retaining the rich context of a particular survey program?

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