

Using Source Tracking URLs in the 2020 Census Paradata

**Monitoring and Assessing the Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Operation
and Digital Advertising Campaign**

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Any views expressed are those of the author and not those of the U.S. Census Bureau.



Overview

- Background on the Mobile Questionnaire Assistance (MQA) Operation
- Background on the 2020 Digital Advertising Campaign
- Source Tracking URLs
- Monitoring MQA During Collection
- MQA and Digital Ad Campaign Preliminary Results
- What we learned and next steps

Background on the Mobile Questionnaire Assistance (MQA) Operation

- What was MQA's aim?
 - To send trained staff to low self-responding areas around the country to encourage self-response and assist respondents with filling out the questionnaire
- What did MQA look like?
 - Tents or tables at grocery stores, food pantries, unemployment benefit locations, pharmacies, and other essential-service places such as the Dept. of Motor Vehicles
- How did MQA work?
 - Self-Guided – Personal device
 - Guided – Staff interview using Census devices

Background on the Mobile Questionnaire Assistance (MQA) Operation



This trolley carried people between MQA sites setup around Richmond, Virginia as a way of boosting self-response.

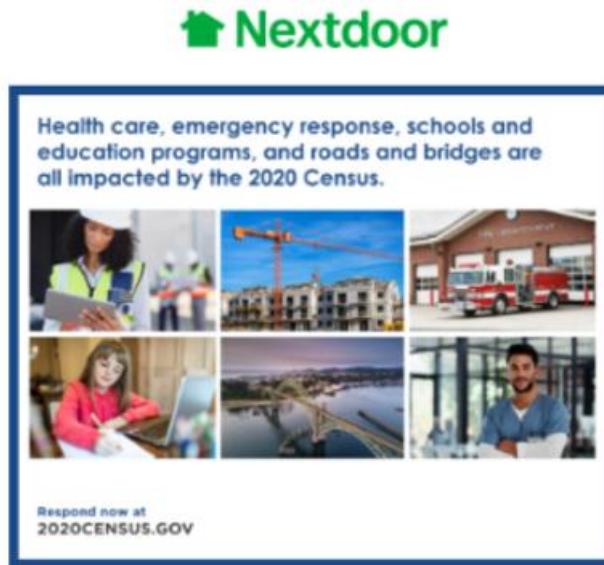
Read more about this story here:

<https://www.nbc12.com/2020/09/17/stoney-us-census-staff-host-trolley-tour-final-push-get-residents-fill-out-census/>

Background on the 2020 Digital Advertising Campaign

- What was the Digital Ad campaign's aim?
 - To encourage self-response through various digital advertisements
- What are some examples of the types of ads used?
 - Videos
 - Banner ads
 - Social media posts
- Where might the digital ads have been found?
 - Social media platforms
 - Search engine results
 - News websites

Background on the 2020 Digital Advertising Campaign



A Google search results page for "census response rates". The top result is an Ad from the 2020 Census. The ad headline is "2020 Census - Official | See Community Response Rates". Below the headline, it says "Responding helps shape resources for children and your community over the next 10 years. Check the response rate map and stay up to date on your town or city. Your Response is Required. Guides for 59 Languages. April 1 is Census Day. Shape Your Future." To the left of the main text, there's a link to "About the 2020 Census" and a link to "Important Dates". At the bottom of the ad, there's a large image of a woman working from home, with text overlay: "Complete the 2020 Census from home." Below the image are two buttons: "RESPOND TODAY" and "Shape your future START HERE". To the right of the image, it says "United States Census 2020".



Source Tracking URLs

- What are Source Tracking URLs?
- How did we get the information we need from them?
- Mock Examples
 - sti_t=mqa&sti_r=...&sti_kv.mqa_type=guided&sti_kv.tag=...
 - sti_t=ad&sti_kv.ad_lp=...&sti_kv.ad_s=...&sti_kv.ad_m=...&sti_kv.ad_a=...&sti_kv.ad_l=...&sti_kv.ad_c=...

Source Tracking URLs Walkthrough: MQA

sti_t=mqa&sti_r=...&sti_kv.mqa_type=guided&sti_kv.tag=...

Source Tracking URLs Walkthrough: MQA

sti_t=mqa&sti_r=...&sti_kv.mqa_type=guided&sti_kv.tag=...

sti_t=mqa

sti_r=...

sti_kv.mqa_type=guided

sti_kv.tag=...

Source Tracking URLs Walkthrough: MQA

sti_t=mqa&sti_r=...&sti_kv.mqa_type=guided&sti_kv.tag=...

sti_t=mqa

sti_r=...

sti_kv.mqa_type=guided

sti_kv.tag=...

Source Tracking URLs Walkthrough: MQA

sti_t=mqa&sti_r=...&sti_kv.mqa_type=guided&sti_kv.tag=...

sti_t=mqa

sti_r=...

sti_kv.mqa_type=guided

sti_kv.tag=...

Source Tracking URLs Walkthrough: Digital Ad

sti_t=ad&sti_kv.ad_ip=...&sti_kv.ad_s=...&sti_kv.ad_m=...&sti_kv.ad_a=...&sti_kv.ad_l=...&sti_kv.ad_c=...

Source Tracking URLs Walkthrough: Digital Ad

sti_t=ad&sti_kv.ad_lp=...&sti_kv.ad_s=...&sti_kv.ad_m=...&sti_kv.ad_a=...&sti_kv.ad_l=...&sti_kv.ad_c=...

sti_t=ad

sti_kv.ad_lp=...

sti_kv.ad_s=...

sti_kv.ad_m=...

sti_kv.ad_a=...

sti_kv.ad_l=...

sti_kv.ad_c=...

Source Tracking URLs Walkthrough: Digital Ad

sti_t=ad&sti_kv.ad_lp=...&sti_kv.ad_s=...&sti_kv.ad_m=...&sti_kv.ad_a=...&sti_kv.ad_l=...&sti_kv.ad_c=...

sti_t=ad

sti_kv.ad_lp=...

sti_kv.ad_s=...

sti_kv.ad_m=...

sti_kv.ad_a=...

sti_kv.ad_l=...

sti_kv.ad_c=...

MQA During Collection

- MQA Source Tracking URL Mock Examples
 - `sti_t=mqa&sti_r=...&sti_kv.mqa_type=guided&sti_kv.tag=...`
 - `sti_t=mqa&sti_r=...&sti_kv.mqa_type=self&sti_kv.tag=...`
- Monitoring:
 - Computed daily MQA session counts by type, Census ID vs Manual Address Input, and whether completed or not
 - Dynamically moved staff each week to different low self-responding areas based on real-time response rates

Preliminary Results for the MQA Operation: Overall MQA Sessions by Type and Sufficiency Status

	Self-Guided MQA (%)* **	Guided MQA (%)* **	All MQA (%)* **
Share of All MQA Sessions	2.3%	97.7%	100.0%

	Self-Guided MQA (%)* **	Guided MQA (%)* **	All MQA (%)* **
Sufficient	97.5%	98.8%	98.8%
Insufficient	3.8%	1.3%	1.4%

*Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding

**Presentation results include all MQA sessions received, which may differ from those included in final 2020 Census assessments and evaluations that take decennial response processing into account

MQA Source Tracking URL Mock Examples

`sti_t=mqa&sti_r=...&sti_kv.mqa_type=guided&sti_kv.tag=...`

`sti_t=mqa&sti_r=...&sti_kv.mqa_type=self&sti_kv.tag=...`

Preliminary Results for the Digital Advertising Campaign: Overall Digital Ad Sessions by Sufficiency Status

	Digital Ad (%)* **
Sufficient	96.3%
Insufficient	3.7%

**Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding*

***Presentation results include all digital ad sessions received, which
may differ from those included in final 2020 Census assessments and
evaluations that take decennial response processing into account*

Digital Ad Source Tracking URL Mock Example

[sti_t=ad&sti_kv.ad_lp=...&sti_kv.ad_s=...&sti_kv.ad_m=...&sti_kv.ad_a=...&sti_kv.ad_l=...&sti_kv.ad_c=...](#)

What we learned and next steps

- Source Tracking Benefits
 - Flexible
 - Easy to analyze
- Source Tracking Limitations
 - Specific web address requirements (MQA)
 - Character limits (Digital Ad)
- Next Steps
 - Additional information in the URLs we want to explore
 - Use these studies to improve on the next census

Contact Information

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Resources

MQA Operation Memo: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/planning-management/memo-series/2020-memo-2019_28.html

2020 Census Integrated Communications Campaign Press Kit:
<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2019/2020-census-integrated-communications-campaign.html>