

Implementing the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification System into Census Surveys

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Some Call it a Job, We Call it a Classification

Over time, occupations change as the type of work people do follows changes in the economy. To keep a current list of occupations, federal statistical agencies update the Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) to ensure a uniform classification across the federal government of workers and jobs into occupational categories. The SOC is updated every decade, 2018 being the latest.

The Census Bureau uses a collapsed version of the SOC list for:

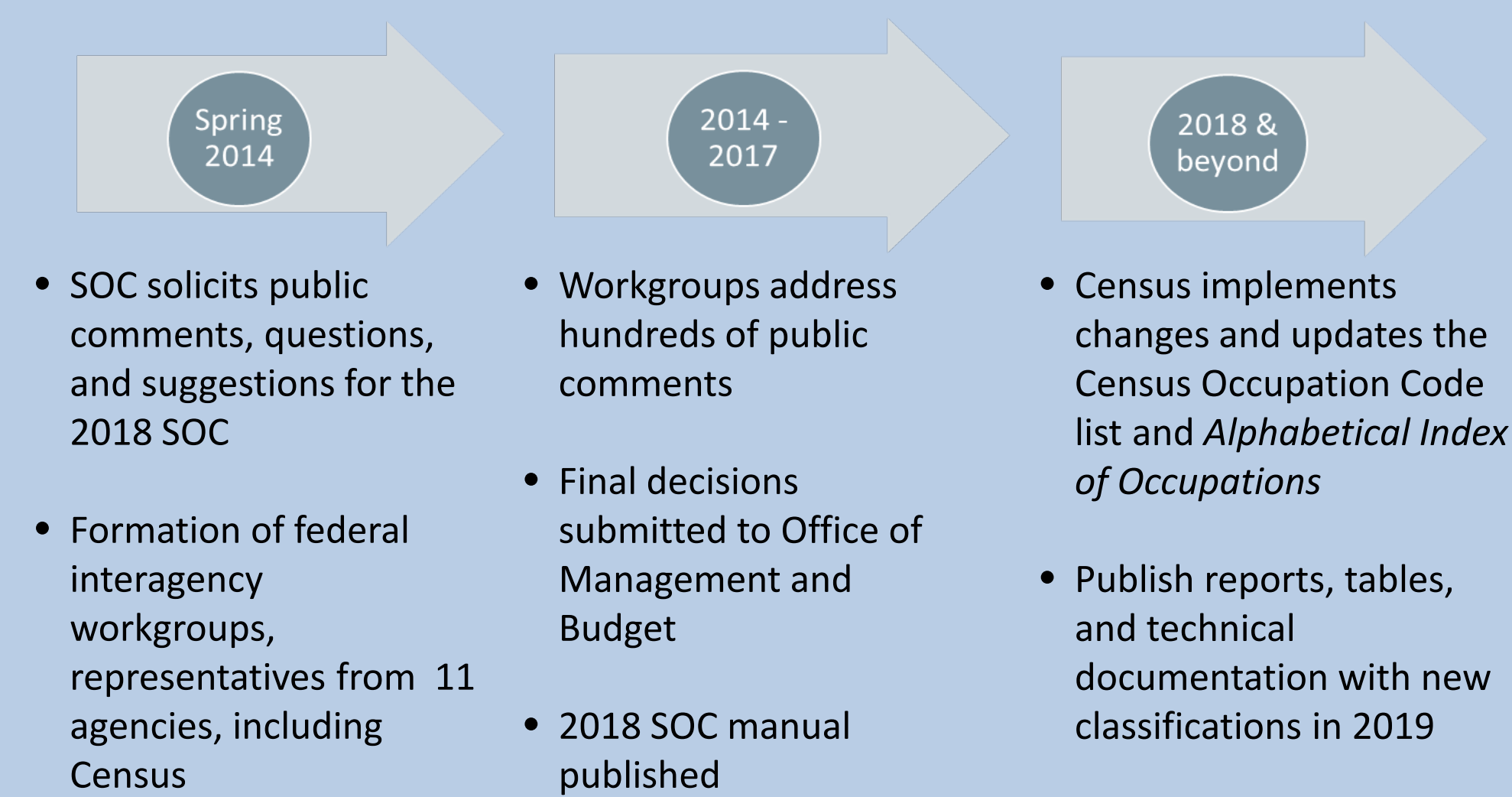
- Collectability
- Confidentiality and statistical precision

2018 Census Occupation Code List

570 Total number of occupations
125 Census codes deleted
155 New Census coded added

Use caution when comparing over time – some occupations disappeared, others emerged, and many were split into new categories

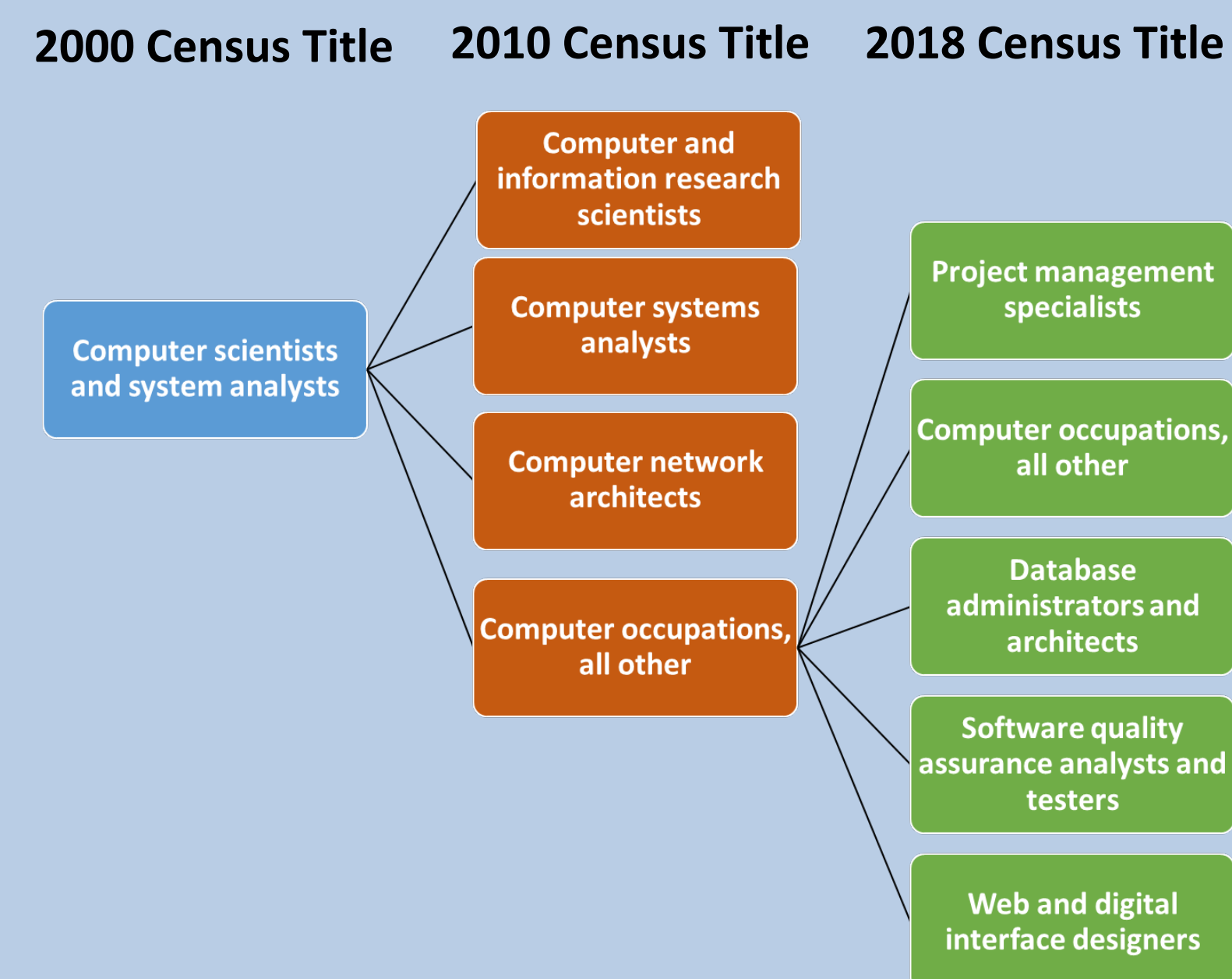
2018 SOC and Census Revision Process



Census Occupation Code List: Out with the Old, In with the New

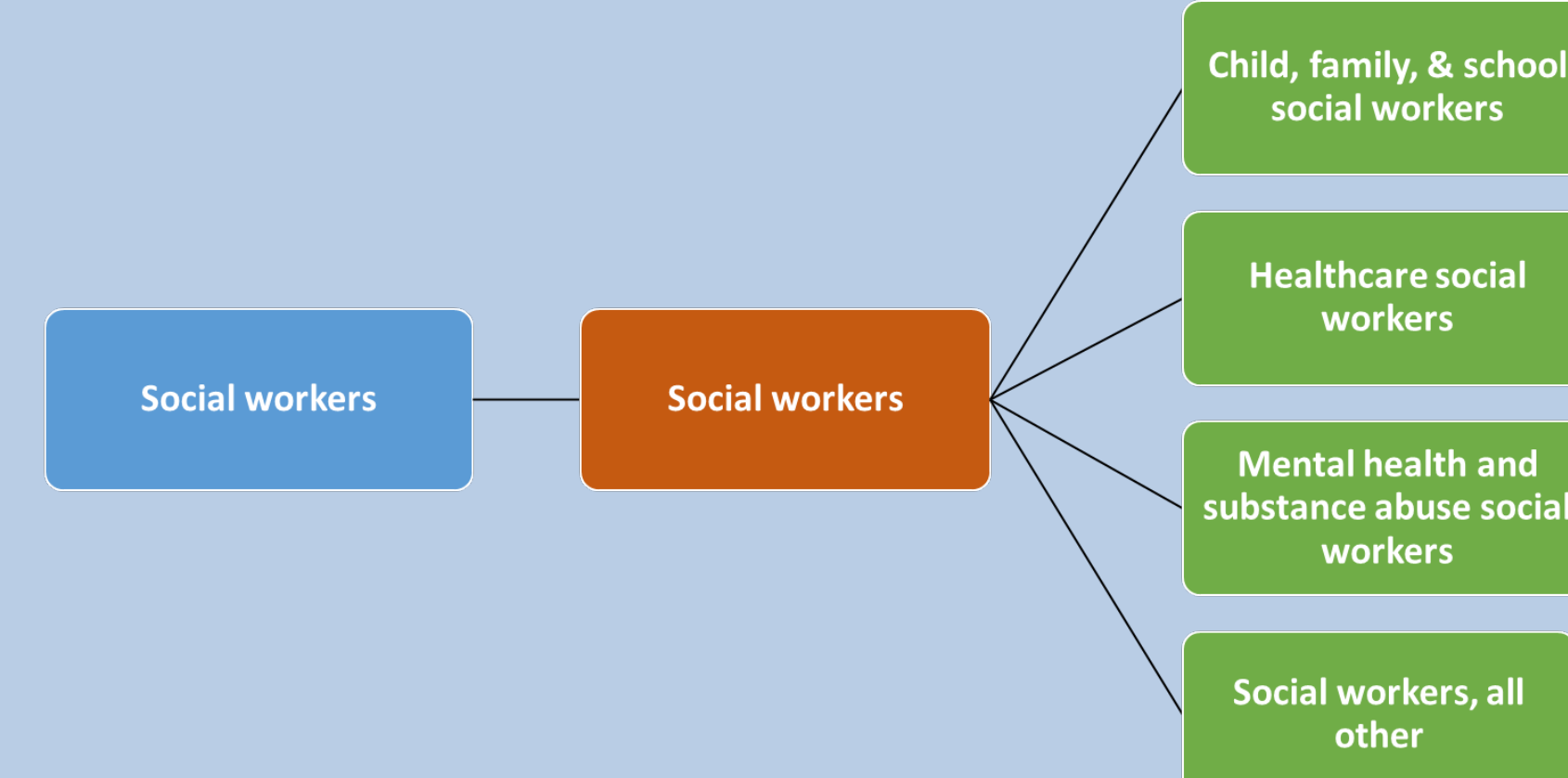
Newly Classified Occupations in the SOC

Growing sectors such as IT and Healthcare affords new occupations. Computer and IT related occupations changed dramatically since 2000. In 2010 and then again in 2018, additional occupations were introduced by splitting out an occupation from the earlier list. For example, the 2010 “Computer occupations, all other” split into 5 new occupations including “Project management specialists” and “Web and digital interface designers.”



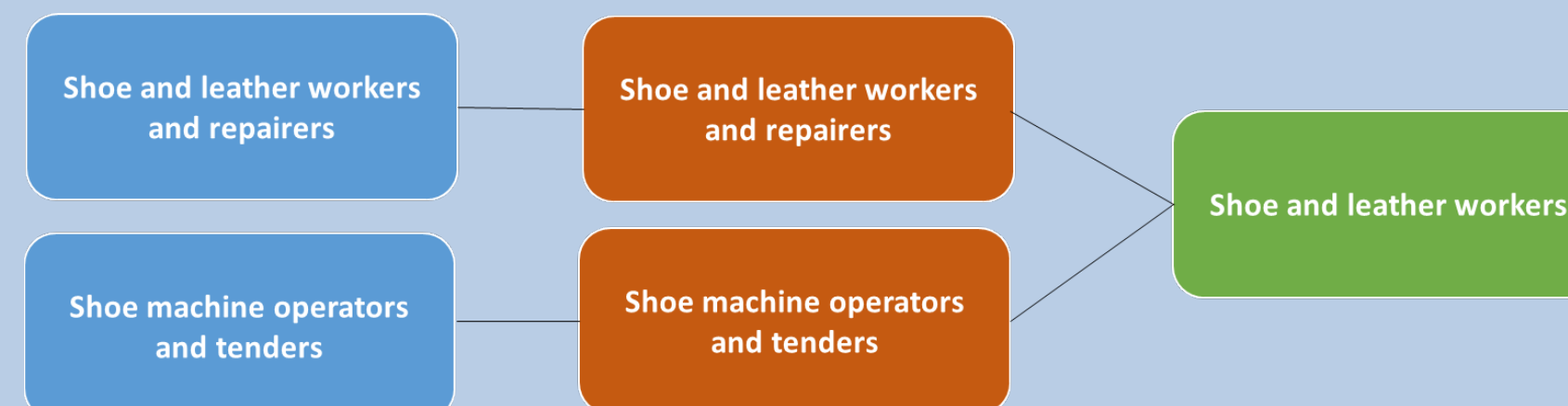
Expanded Occupations

Census Bureau staff determined previously collapsed occupations had sufficient sample size and specificity of occupational write-in data. For example, more specific social work occupations were added in 2018.



Combined Occupations

Occupations were combined because of declining numbers and challenges in collectability. For example, specific shoe and leather workers occupations were combined for 2018.



Implementing the 2018 Census Code List

Example of a write-in response:

45 What kind of work was this person doing? (For example: registered nurse, personnel manager, supervisor of order department, secretary, accountant)
Web designer

46 What were this person's most important activities or duties? (For example: patient care, directing hiring policies, supervising order clerks, typing and filing, reconciling financial records)
Develop websites

Alphabetical Index of Occupations	
Job title	2018 Census Occupation Code
Digital designer	1032
Graphic web designer	1032
Web content specialist	1032
Web designer	1032
Web specialist	1032

Additional variables used to code and/or edit responses: county, state, age, education, sex, class of worker, industry, active duty military

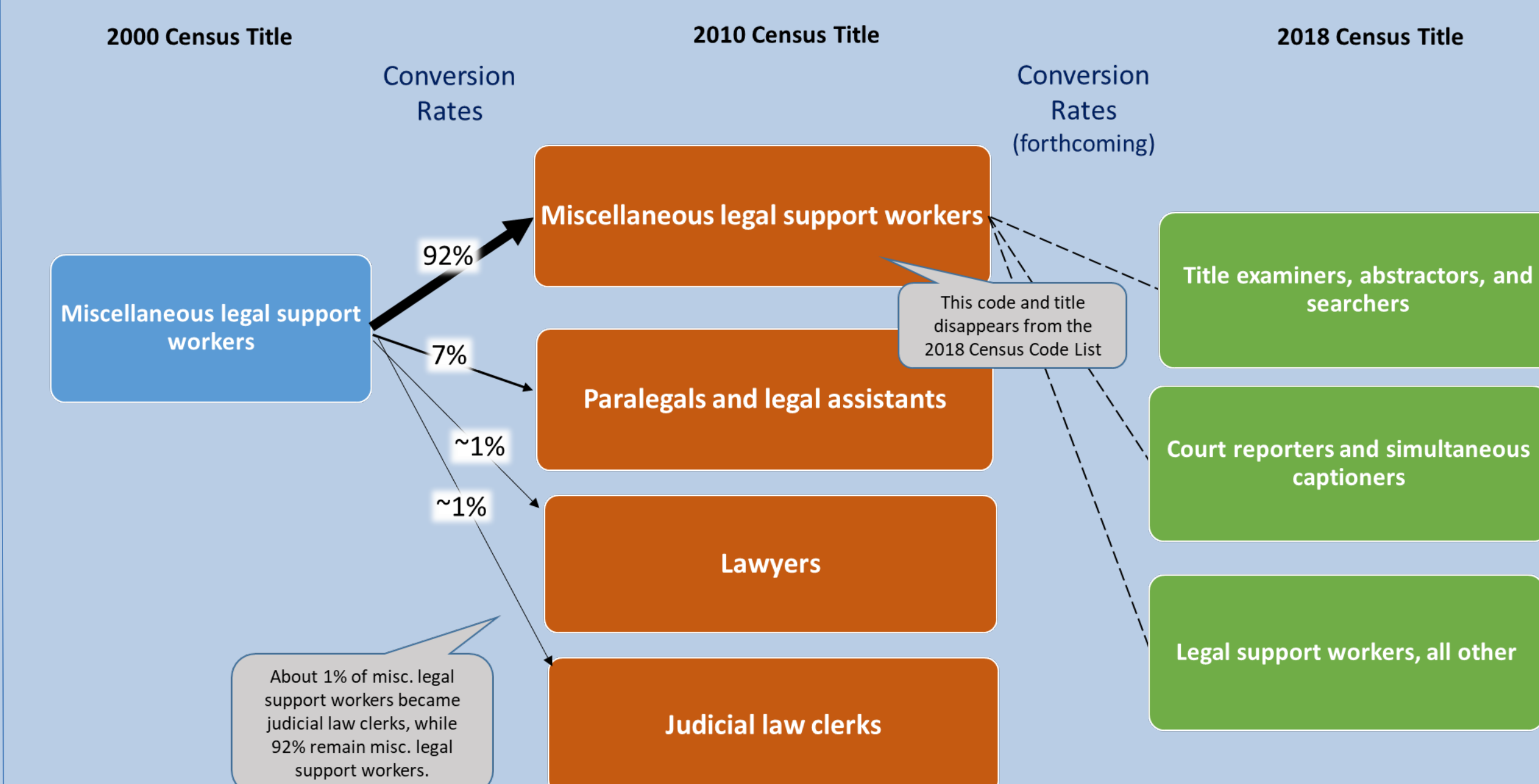
Web and Digital Interface Designers
2018 Census Occupation Code 1032

Coding Household Surveys

Clerical coders, with the assistance of an autocoder, use the *Alphabetical Index of Occupations* to code write-in responses from surveys. The *Index* contains over 30,000 job titles and each title is assigned to a specific occupation classification. This *Index* is updated yearly to incorporate emerging jobs titles as well as to incorporate classification updates.

Bridging Old and New Occupations

To create a “bridge” between classification years, the Census Bureau recodes data with both the old and new occupations to determine the proportion of respondents who should be allocated to the new code. A **conversion rate** is the proportion of each old occupation code that should be allocated to each new code.



Crosswalks and Data User Support: [<census.gov/topics/employment/industry-occupation>](https://www.census.gov/topics/employment/industry-occupation/)