

# 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/story-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

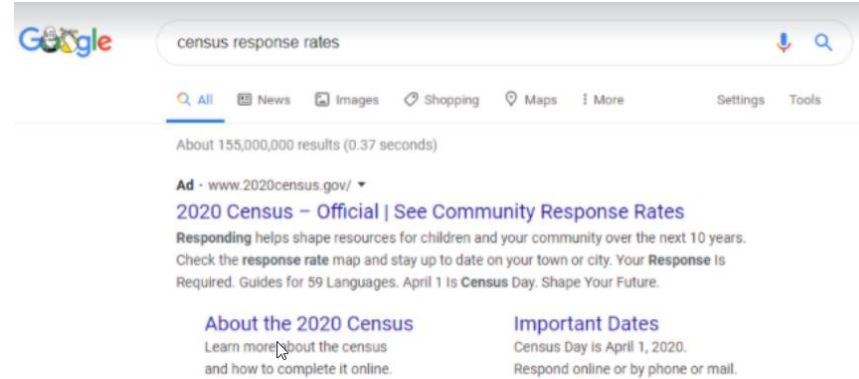
# Background on the 2020 Digital Advertising Campaign



Health care, emergency response, schools and education programs, and roads and bridges are all impacted by the 2020 Census.



Respond now at  
[2020CENSUS.GOV](https://2020census.gov)



Google search results for "census response rates". The search bar shows "census response rates" and the results page displays "About 155,000,000 results (0.37 seconds)". An advertisement is shown for "2020 Census - Official | See Community Response Rates". The ad text includes: "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." Below the ad are two links: "About the 2020 Census" and "Important Dates".



Complete the  
2020 Census  
from home.

RESPOND TODAY >

Shape  
your future  
START HERE >

United States  
Census  
2020



Do something  
for your  
community.

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\_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=...

# Source Tracking URLs Walkthrough: Digital Ad

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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](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>