



U.S. Census Bureau counts on digital messages to maximize public connections



Client Situation

The United States Census Bureau's mission is to serve as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy. The Bureau strives to provide the best mix of timeliness, relevance, quality and cost for the data collected and services provided. The data provided by the Census Bureau impacts groups responsible for neighborhood improvements, public health, education, and transportation and is relevant for all U.S. citizens. These stakeholder groups desire and demand that the Bureau's communication strategy reflect the same distinction as the data - timely, relevant and cost-effective.

The Census Bureau collects a multitude of data on varying schedules. The Population & Housing Census, conducted every 10 years, is generally considered the highest-profile data series. Prior to the 2010 Census, the Census Bureau realized an immediate need for an efficient, comprehensive communication solution to engage with citizens through email, the Bureau's existing blogosphere presence, and social media.

Solution

The Census Bureau looked to GovDelivery Digital Communication Management to proactively reach out to citizens and encourage timely participation in the 2010 Census. The email subscription service was launched late in 2008 and provided a simple method for communicating directly to citizens and further leveraging existing content published to blogs and social media outlets.

The Census Bureau added updates to GovLoop®, Twitter® and Facebook®, as well as the Director's Blog as subscription topics. A number of available subscriptions are tailored to business partners and educational resources for schools. Beyond leveraging social media content, the Census Bureau partnered up with the Bureau of Economic Analysis through the GovDelivery Network, allowing all involved agencies to cross-promote content and subscription topics to the varying audiences and stakeholder groups.

The Bureau worked to further expand engagement through offering additional topical updates - realizing 166-percent growth in subscriptions - and creating opportunities for ongoing direct engagement by citizens through its four blogs.

Results

In February 2011, the Census Bureau was recognized as the 2010 Annual *Excellence in Communications Award* winner for its innovative approach to communication and public service through effective channels, collaboration, and compelling content. In 2010, the Census Bureau used digital communications to increase the effectiveness of Census 2010 outreach efforts, generating \$1.87 billion in savings to taxpayers due to inner-agency work collaboration.

These cost savings are in addition to the Bureau sending out over 3-million messages covering 196 subscription topics to more than 110,000 individual subscribers between January 1, 2010 and March 31, 2011. Collaboration with other agency sites continues to help boost the Bureau's subscriber numbers - in fact, more than 23 percent of new subscribers came from sign-ups placed on other GovDelivery client sites.

