

Glossary of Terms

A

Address Based Sampling (ABS)

Sample Frame consisting of 135 million residential addresses providing nearly 100% coverage of all households. Sample frames can be defined by Census or Postal geography, from National down to Census Block.

ASCII

American Standard Code for Information Interchange

B

Block Numbering Areas

In non-metropolitan counties, the Census Bureau has created Block Numbering Areas (BNA). A BNA is an area equivalent to a Census Tract, and like Census Tracts, they do not cross county boundaries, but may cross city, town, or township boundaries. There were about 12,000 BNAs nationwide prior to the 2000 Census. BNA's were converted to Census Tracts beginning with the 2000 Census.

C

Carrier Route

A Carrier Route is the specific delivery route within a ZIP Code followed by an U.S. Postal Service Mail Carrier. Bulk mailers who send large volumes of mail are required to sort by Carrier Route and append an additional two digits to the ZIP+4 code. The additional two digits indicate the Delivery Point, which is the actual stop on the Mail Carrier's Route.

Census Block

The smallest unit of geography used by the Census Bureau to report and collect Census Data. Census Blocks are subdivisions of Census Tracts. In urban areas, a Census Block is roughly the size of a city block. Census Blocks are much larger in rural areas. For the 2000 Census there were approximately 8.2 million Census Blocks. For the 2010 Census, there are 11 million Census Blocks. Census Blocks are identified with four-digit numbers in a range from 0001 to 9999.

Census Block Group

A Block Group is an area consisting of a group of Census Blocks. The first digit in the Census Block identifies the Block Group. For example, Block Group 3 consists of all Blocks in the range 3000 to 3999. For the 2000 Census, there are roughly 208,000 Block Groups in the U.S. Aggregations of Block Groups create Census Tracts.

Census Tract

A Census Tract is an area used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census to collect and tabulate Census data. Census Tracts are subdivisions of counties and generally contains between 2500 and 8000 persons. Census Tracts do not cross County boundaries, but can cross city, township, and town boundaries. Census Tract boundaries usually remain permanent for about 10 years and change only at the onset of the decennial Census. There are approximately 65,000 Census Tracts in the U.S. Census Tract numbering consists of a four-digit number with a two-digit suffix.

Congressional District

A Congressional District is a geographic area represented by an elected member of the U.S. House of Representatives. There are 435 Congressional Districts in the U.S., which are apportioned to each state based on the current Decennial Census population. Each state creates Congressional Districts by aggregating Census Blocks or Voting Districts. For the 2010 Census, each Congressional District contains on average 710,000 people. The 113th Congress will be the first Congress to reflect the 2010 Census. Congressional Districts can cross city, town, township, and county boundaries, but do not cross state boundaries. Congressional Districts in rural parts of states may be made up of whole counties, while those in urban and suburban areas tend to split counties, cities, etc.

Core-Based Statistical Areas

Metropolitan Areas generally consist of a population nucleus and the surrounding area that has an economic and social relationship with the nucleus. The Office of Management and Budget defines metropolitan areas and has set the standards for Core-Based Statistical Areas. Analyzing population and commuting data collected during the 2000 Census developed the standards for CBSAs. CBSAs consist of at least one central county containing an Incorporated Place or Census Designated Place with a population of at least 10,000. CBSAs will include adjacent counties if at least 25 percent of the employed residents of that county work in the central county and/or 25 percent of the workers in the adjacent county reside in the central county of the CBSA. All CBSAs are defined at the county level except for those that are located in the six New England states. These CBSAs are known as New England City and Town Areas (NECTA) and are defined by cities and towns. CBSAs are divided into Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Micropolitan Statistical Areas. CBSAs incorporate a five-digit-coding scheme, unique across both Micropolitan and Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

D

Designated Marketing Area (DMA)

Designated Market Areas (DMA) are television markets defined and measured by The Nielsen Company. DMA's are defined by counties or portions of counties. There are 210 DMA's in the US

DMA Code

A three-digit number assigned to each DMA by The Nielsen Company and used for identification.

E

EPSEM

Equal Probability of Selection Method

Expected Incidence

This incidence rate is the estimated percent of household contacts that will qualify for the survey (based on any screening questions in the survey document).

F

FIPS State/County Code

A unique 5-digit code assigned to every county in the U.S. by the federal government. The first two digits of the FIPS (Federal Information Processing Standards) Code represent the state and the last three digits represent the county within the state.

M

Measure of Size

In surveys, 'Measure of Size' (MOS) is the count of units in a sampling frame that is used to select, usually first-stage sample units, with probability proportionate to size. In a pure epsem RDD sample, each number has an equal probability of selection. In a modified selection, a weight or MOS can be placed on selection probability, thus making the chances greater of selecting a certain type of household.

Method of Generation

The two generation methods to choose from when generating random digit dialing samples in Virtual GENESYS are RDD and MOD1. The standard Virtual GENESYS RDD methodology produces a strict single stage, EPSEM (Equal Probability of Selection Method) sample of residential telephone numbers. In other words, a Virtual GENESYS RDD sample ensures an equal and known probability of selection for every residential telephone number in the sampling frame. In some situations, a sampling methodology other than a strict EPSEM RDD may prove beneficial. Virtual GENESYS provides an alternative RDD procedure that results in probability samples of telephone households. This method is more efficient in that it yields slightly higher proportions of households than a strict RDD methodology. While an EPSEM assigns a known and equal probability of selection to each telephone number, modified generation procedures provide a known but unequal probability of selection. The MOD1 sample generation method increases efficiency by over-sampling telephone exchanges with higher densities of households, and decreases the sampling rate in those with lower densities.

Metro Status Code

The Metro Status Code (MSC) is an exchange-based variable developed by MSG that is a sub-classification of an MSA. It is a one-digit code defined as follows:

- 1 = In Principle City(s) of an MSA
- 2 = In the county of a Principle City(s), but outside of the Principle City(s)
- 3 = In a suburban county of an MSA that does not contain a Principle City(s).
- 4 = In an MSA that contains no Principle City(s)
- 5 = In a non-MSA county

Metropolitan Areas

An urban area defined by the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) with a population of at least 10,000 people. These areas are known as Core Based Statistical Areas and are further defined as Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) or Micropolitan Statistical Areas.

Metropolitan Statistical Area

A Core-Based Statistical Area associated with at least one urbanized area that has a population of 50,000 (based on the 2000 Census). The Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is comprised of a central county or counties containing the population core, plus adjacent outlying counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the central county as measured through commuting. MSAs account for roughly 83% of the total US population.

Micropolitan Statistical Area

A Core-Based Statistical Area with at least one urban cluster that has a population of 10,000, but less than 50,000 (based on the 2000 Census). The Micropolitan Statistical Area is comprised of a central county or counties containing the core, plus adjacent outlying counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the central county as measured through commuting. Micropolitan Areas account for roughly 10% of the total US population.

Minor Civil Division

Minor Civil Divisions (MCDs) are known under various terms, including towns, townships, boroughs, and cities and only exist in 28 states. MCDs are legal boundaries and are generally defined by Census Tracts. However, Census Tract boundaries may cross MCD boundaries and can include more than one MCD. In states without MCDs, the Census Bureau has created Census County Divisions (CCD). A CCD is an area created using combinations of Census Tracts. It has no legal boundaries and functions primarily for the collection and tabulation of Census statistics.

MOS

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N

Nielsen County Size

The classification of all counties in the US into one of four groups based on households. It is a one-digit code defined as follows:

'A' = All counties in the largest metropolitan areas, which together account for 40 percent of U.S. households.

'B' = All counties in the next largest set of metropolitan areas, which together account for 30 percent of U.S. households. No non-metropolitan counties are large enough to qualify as A or B counties.

'C' = All counties in the next largest set of areas, including both metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties, which account for 15 percent of U.S. households.

'D' = All remaining counties.

NPA

Numbering Plan Area code, the first three digits of a 10 digit North American Numbering Plan (NANP) number, commonly called the **Area Code**.

NXX

Central Office Code, the first three digits following the **Area Code** in a 10 digit NANP number, commonly called the telephone **exchange** or **prefix**.

NPA-NXX

10-digit North American Numbering Plan phone numbers begin with the format NPA-NXX, where NPA is the three-digit Numbering Plan Area (area code) and NXX (exchange) identifies the central office exchange allocated within the NPAs.

P

Place

Place is defined by the Census Bureau as an incorporated place with an active government and with defined geographic boundaries such as a city, town, village, etc. Places may be subdivisions of MCDs. In some situations, they are the same as MCDs. In addition, the Census Bureau recognizes unincorporated places that have no defined boundaries or government. These are known as Census Designated Places (CDP). There may be a relationship between place boundaries and Census Tract boundaries, but tract and place boundaries do not necessarily correspond. There are 23,000 places in the U.S.

R

Rate Center

A rate center is the center point of a geographic area that defines the Rate Exchange Area. It is also referred to as the geographic area that an exchange serves.

Random Digit Dialing

Random Digit Dialing (RDD): Using a computer and algorithms to generate a truly random, non-directory-based sample of 10-digit telephone numbers.

Replicate

A replicate is a representative subset of the entire sample file, where each of these subsets is representative of the original sample file. For example, if 10 percent of your entire sample file was in California, then 10 percent of the phone numbers in each replicate will also be in California.

S

Sample Rate

Sample Rate is the number of sample pieces needed to obtain a completed screen.

Sample Frame

Sample frame is the population universe from which a sample is drawn.

Screen

A screen is someone who will answer the qualifying questions, even though they may not qualify for the survey.

V

Virtual GENESYS

Virtual GENESYS is a web based application that provides access to a suite of sampling solutions. Address-based samples and Telephone samples, including Landline RDD, Cellular RDD, and Listed Household samples, can be selected anytime day or night. Virtual GENESYS is an intuitive real-time application and a valuable tool for today's researcher. All sample requests are processed as soon as orders are placed and users receive an email and a link to our portal to retrieve their sample once they are completed.

W

Wire Center

Decoded from the first 8 characters of the switch Common Language Location Identifier (CLLI) code, this field will identify at a minimum the city location of the telephone company switch. The **Wire Center** identifies where service for a particular NPA NXX originates from which may be different than the NPA NXX service area. Also referred to as **Central Office** or **exchange**.

Working Bank Threshold

Number of listings a 100-series bank must contain to be considered a Working Bank.

ZIP Code

ZIP is an acronym for Zone Improvement Plan. The U.S. Postal Service introduced ZIP Codes in the early 1960s as a means of improving mail delivery. ZIP Code boundaries change often and can cross city, town, township, and county boundaries, and in rare situations cross state boundaries. There are roughly 44,000 ZIP Codes in the U.S. However, approximately 10,000 ZIP codes are non-residential consisting PO Boxes only or business or office buildings with high volumes of mail. ZIP Codes are five-digit codes and range from 01001 to 99999. The first digit indicates one of 10 geographic regions of the U.S. The next two digits indicate smaller geographic regions within a State. The first three numbers combined are the Sectional Center Facility (SCF), which is a facility where mail is sorted before it is sent on to local Post Offices. The fourth and fifth digits of the ZIP code identify the local Post Office.

ZIP+4

ZIP+4 codes are a four-digit suffix to ZIP codes that allow for more detailed sorting of mail. The first two digits of the +4 code are a Section, which may be a group of streets, several city blocks, a housing development, an apartment complex, or an office building, etc. The last two digits are the Delivery Segment, which indicate a hundred block range, a side of a street, a floor of an office building, a building in an apartment complex, or a post office box, etc. There are nearly 68 million ZIP+4 codes in the U.S.