

Advances Due to Capture of Data in Margins of Questionnaires

11/1/2010

The 2010 Census data capture solution incorporated the automated capability to identify the presence of respondent markings presented outside the designated response boxes on paper questionnaires. When detected, these markings were presented to a capture analyst for disposition. Some examples of the impact of this capture process follow below.

Example 1 – Ages reported in months, days, or weeks

In some instances, the age of young children is reported in months, days, or weeks when they are less than one year old. In this example from the extended roster on a mailback form, the date of birth information is missing, leaving only the information reported for age. Without detection of the word “months” in the margin, this person would have been counted as a 4-year-old.

The image shows a section of a questionnaire with two main fields: "Age on April 1, 2010" and "Date of Birth". The "Date of Birth" field is divided into three sub-fields: "Month", "Day", and "Year". The "Age on April 1, 2010" field contains a segmented box with the number "4" in the first segment. In the margin to the right of this box, the word "Months" is handwritten in black ink. The "Date of Birth" sub-fields are empty.

Example 2 – Capture of continued or misplaced write-in responses

When whole or partial responses are presented outside response boxes, the portion outside the boxes may not have been captured entirely. The solution provided the capability to ensure that the responses to the questions were keyed. (Note that the length of the keyed response may exceed the number of segmented boxes in the field on the questionnaire. For example, up to thirty characters are processed from race and Hispanic write-in responses.) In the snippet below, “Mexican” is captured.

The image shows two questions from a questionnaire. Question 8 asks "Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?" with five radio button options. Question 9 asks "What is Person 1's race? Mark [X] one or more boxes." with a "White" radio button option. Handwritten in black ink in the margin between the two questions is "MOM IS CHILEAN, DAD IS MEXICAN".

Example 3 – Notes indicating non-residents

In some instances, respondents wrote notes indicating that the person data applied to no person actually living in the unit on Census Day. Some of these notes indicated that the data provided described unborn children, deceased household members, or the family pet.

Example 4 – Name inversions

Respondents often wrote their first names in the box indicated for last name and their last names in the boxes for first name. In many cases, they drew an arrow, sometimes accompanied by a note, showing that the responses should be reversed. Without the enhanced capability to detect the presence of this arrow, the names may not have been reversed as directed by the respondent. However, the system's capability to handle situations impacting multiple fields ensured that these data were captured correctly. In the situation shown here, the names would have been captured in the correct field.

1. Print name of **Person 2**

Last Name	JOHN
First Name	DOE

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