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A Quick Primer on Disclosure Avoidance

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What is Disclosure Avoidance?

- **Disclosure avoidance** is a process to protect the confidentiality of respondents' personal information in published data.
- Disclosure avoidance is **not new**; first used in 1930 Census when some tables for small geographic areas were not published to protect respondents' confidential data.



The Differential Privacy framework used in the 2020 Census **is new.**

- Advances in technology and rapid growth of new databases have increased concerns about data privacy.
- Differential privacy is a disclosure avoidance framework used to protect the confidentiality of respondents' data in published products.
- Adds statistical noise so no one can associate published data with a person or household with certainty.
- So far, differential privacy algorithms have been applied **only** to 2020 Census data.
- At present, there are **no plans** to apply the techniques used in the 2020 Census to the ACS data; the science does not yet exist.

For more information:

ACS disclosure avoidance webpage

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/methodology/disclosure-avoidance.html>

Reader-friendly briefs about the 2020 Census application

- [Disclosure Avoidance and the 2020 Redistricting Data](#)
- [Why the Census Bureau Chose Differential Privacy](#)
- [Disclosure Avoidance and the 2020 Census: How the TopDown Algorithm Works](#)

Thank you!



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