DIFFERENTIAL PRIVACY AND THE 2020 CENSUS: MODERNIZING DISCLOSURE AVOIDANCE AT SCALE TO MITIGATE GROWING PRIVACY THREATS

PRIVACY DAY WEBINAR
12:00-1:00, TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2020

REGISTRATION LINK FOR PRESENTATION:

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Abstract

The privacy risks associated with the publication of official statistics have increased significantly over the last decade, fueled by the proliferation of detailed, third-party data sources and technological advances that make re-identification of individuals in public data releases increasingly easy. This webinar will discuss the U.S. Census Bureau's research into these emerging privacy threats, and the agency's efforts to modernize its disclosure avoidance methods using differential privacy to ensure the confidentiality of individuals' data. Differential privacy offers significant advantages over traditional disclosure avoidance methods for safeguarding individuals' privacy, but the implementation of differential privacy at scale for the 2020 Decennial Census has also posed a number of scientific, engineering, and operational challenges. This presentation will explore these challenges and discuss the lessons learned from this initiative.



Michael Hawes, U.S. Bureau of the Census

Michael Hawes is the Senior Advisor for Data Access and Privacy at the U.S. Census Bureau. He is responsible for outreach and engagement with the Census Bureau's data users on issues relating to the impact of privacy protection methodologies on the accessibility and usability of Census data. Michael is a member of the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM), chairs FCSM's Confidentiality and Data Access Committee, and serves as vice-chair of the American Statistical Association's Committee on Professional Ethics in Statistics. Prior to joining the Census Bureau, Michael served as the Director of Student Privacy at the U.S. Department of Education. In that capacity, he was the Department's senior policy official responsible for the administration and enforcement of federal laws governing the privacy and confidentiality of education records, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Michael also served as Privacy Consultant to the Federal Commission on Evidence-based Policymaking, and as a principal author of the final report of the Federal Commission on School Safety. Michael is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP), an Excellence in Government Senior Fellow, and a Certified Government Information Privacy Professional (CIPP/G).