Using Location-Based Information to Improve Cultural and Demographic Statistical Data

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Abstract: The United States Census Bureau first utilized location-based services in support of its 2010 decennial census. Field Representatives (140,000) carrying handheld computers equipped with GPS technology captured a coordinate for each residential structure in the United States, facilitating the assignment of housing units to their correct geography and improving the quality of address based Census cultural and demographic statistics.

The Census collects and reports information through a wide range of programs, including the Economic Census and yearly current censuses and surveys. The 2010 decennial census handheld computer was designed for a singular data capture operation. Based on lessons learned from the 2010 experience, this decade the Census Bureau plans to expand the use of location-based technology to improve the quality of field data collection and ultimately data reporting. This includes a consistent approach, regardless of the type of census or survey. Requirements are being gathered and prototypes developed for a corporate listing device with improved technology that will meet the needs of all field data collection and data reporting activities.