

2015 Census Test: Advertising and Partnerships Savannah Test Site

National Advisory Committee

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May 27, 2016

Overview

Mission: Implement a comprehensive and integrated communications program in the Savannah media market for the 2015 Census Test.

Objective: Answer communications research questions about the use and impact of microtargeted digital advertising on response rates.

*The purpose of our communications was **not** to maximize self-response. We aimed to examine the efficacy of targeted digital advertising to selected hard-to-survey audiences.*

Landscape

- Test conducted in Savannah Designated Marketing Area (DMA)
 - 439,918 MAFIDs/housing units
 - 331,976 occupied households
 - 20 counties (17 in Georgia and three in South Carolina)
 - 106 non-P.O. box ZIP codes
- Site demographics
 - 59.3% White, 29.9% Black, 7.4% Hispanic
 - 12.3% Ages 18 – 24 and 13.1% 65+
 - 18.8% Below the poverty line
 - 65.9% HHs with residential fixed Internet

Source: ZCTA data, ACS 5-year estimates, 2008-2012

Communications Elements

- Selection of households received mailing materials as part of concurrent operational tests
- Communications elements employed to simulate a decennial census environment:
 - Earned Media
 - Partnership outreach
 - Television and radio advertising
 - Print and out-of-home advertising
 - Digital advertising and social media
 - Influencer telephone calls
- No Nonresponse Followup (NRFU) operation in test site

Exposure to Mailing Materials

Mail Panel	Number of Households	Contact Method
Full Test Mailout	90,000	Flight of mailings and Communications Campaign
Late Postcard*	30,000	Postcard and Communications Campaign
No Mail	319,918	Communications Campaign Only
Total	439,918	

**Sent only to households sampled from those that had not responded by April 30th*

Test Digital Panel Design

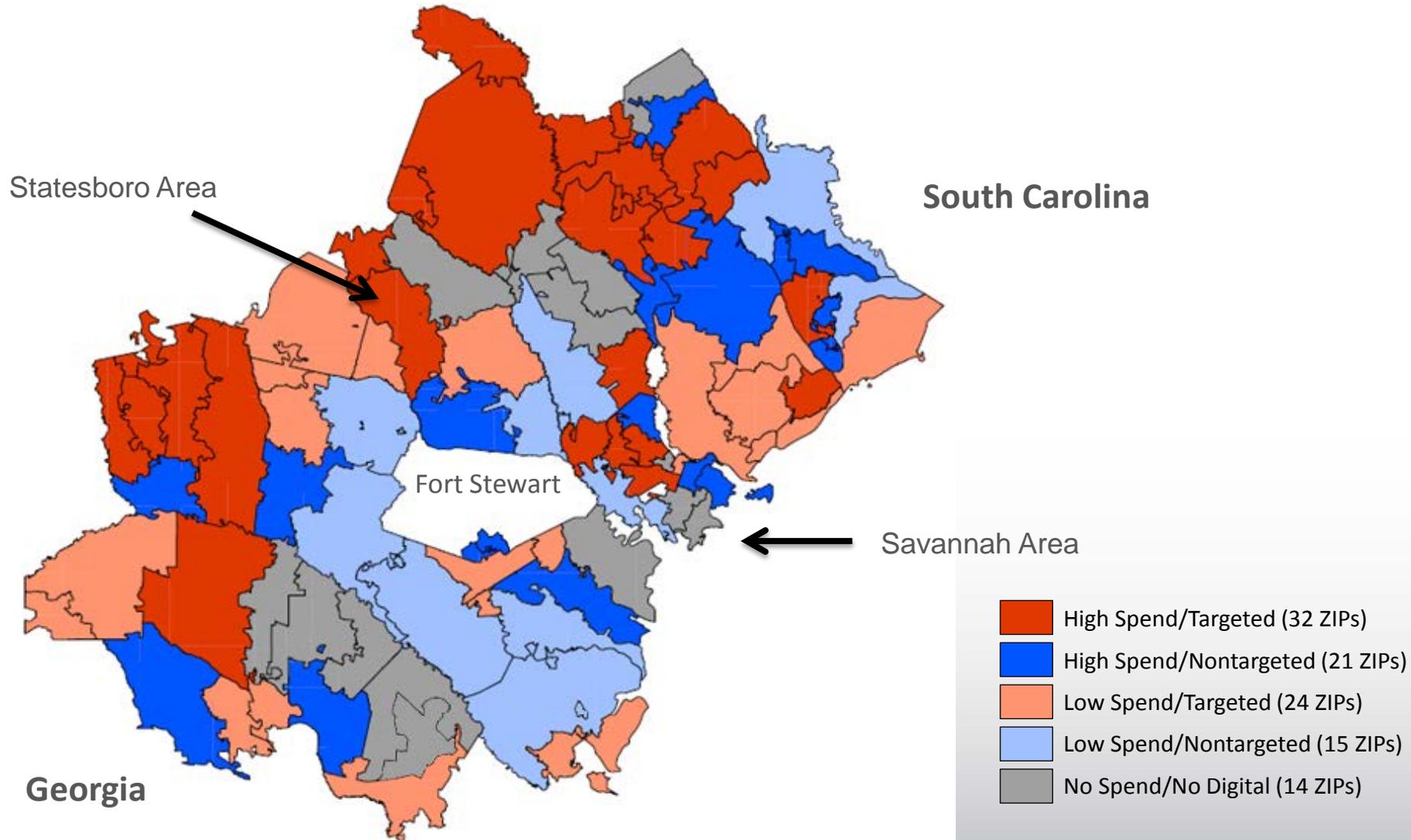
Each non-P.O. Box ZIP code assigned to one of five digital panels

DMA wide exposure to television, radio, and print advertising; earned media; influencer phone calls (60K households); mailing materials (90K households); and a late postcard (30K households).

	Targeted	Nontargeted
High spend level* (per household)	Panel A Targeted advertising + General digital advertising	Panel B General digital advertising
Low spend level* (per household)	Panel C Targeted advertising + General digital advertising	Panel D General digital advertising
No spend	Panel E No digital advertising (control panel)	

* High spend level was ~\$2.38 per household. Low spend level was ~\$1.21 per household.

Test Digital Panel Design



Targeted Advertising

- We created targeted advertisements using online, individualized microtargeting tools to reach members of hard-to-survey (HTS) audiences.
- We identified nine priority HTS audiences based on historical response rates and available inventory:
 - Young (ages 18-25)
 - Seniors (age 65+)
 - Adults with less than a high school diploma
 - Families with children
 - Lower HH income (<39,734)
 - African American/Black
 - Renters
 - Hispanics and Spanish speakers
 - Female heads of household

Results

Targeted Digital Advertising Accuracy by Audience

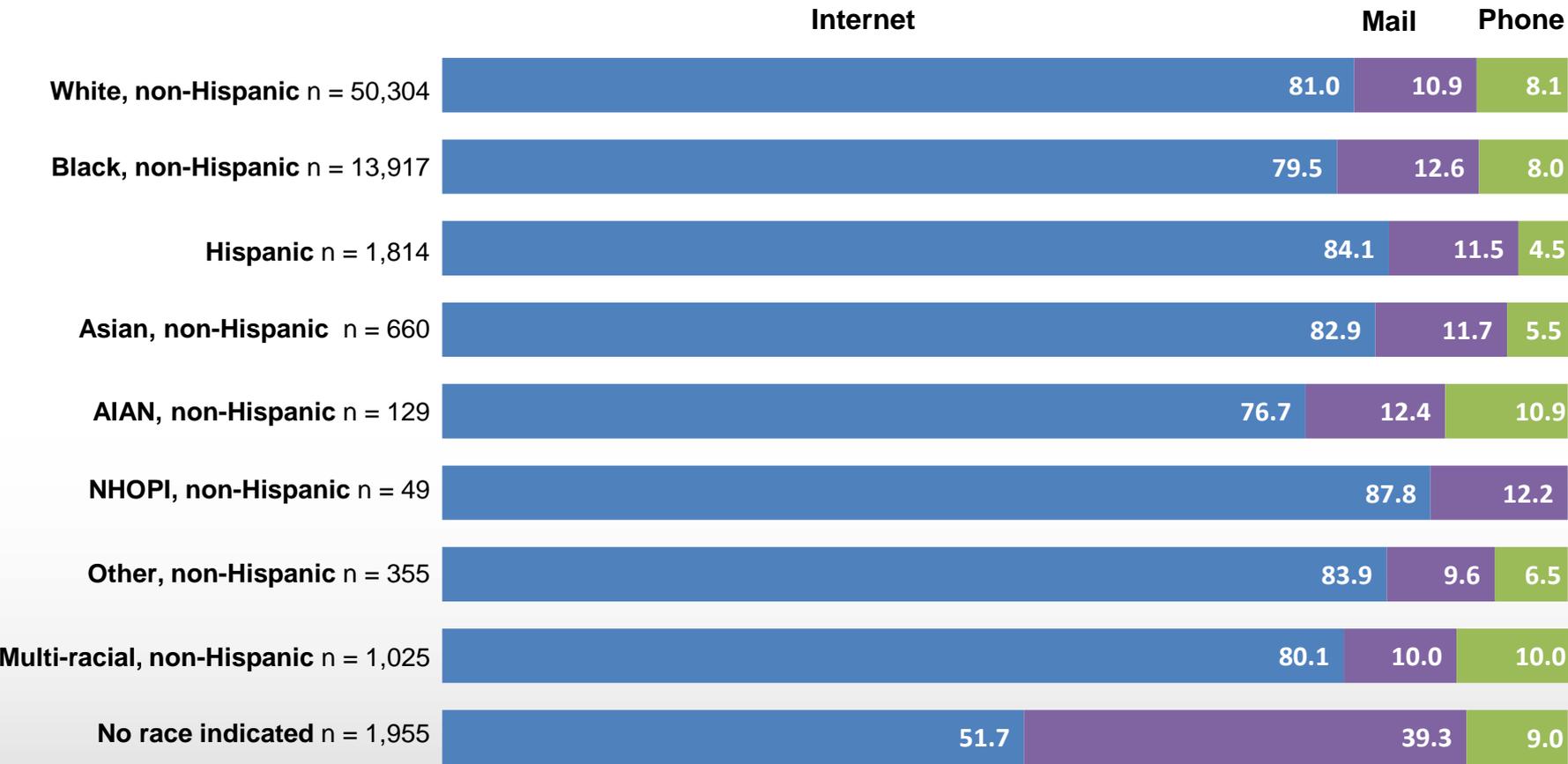
Target Audience	Total Number of Online Submissions from Targeting Method	Number of Online Submissions that Matched Target	% of Online Submissions that Matched Target
African American	248	187	75.4%
Hispanic	59	43	72.9%
Young	45	22	48.9%
Senior	249	219	88.0%
Chatham County	21	21	100.0%
Beaufort County	97	78	80.4%
Renters	112	51	45.5%

Self Response by Mode – Percent of Total Submissions

Self Response Mode	All Submissions	
	Count	% of Submissions
Total Submissions	70,208	100.0%
Mode: Internet	56,145	80.0%
Blank (largely mailout URL)	27,171	38.7%
Census Vanity URL	19,948	28.4%
Digital Ad Initiated	7,704	11.0%
Partners/Events	287	0.4%
GovDelivery (email)	230	0.3%
Postcard URL	764	1.1%
QR Code (from print ads)	19	0.0%
Out-of-Home SMS	12	0.0%
Organic Social Media	5	0.0%
Unidentified	5	0.0%
Mode: Paper, mail-back	8,461	12.1%
Mode: Telephone, in-bound	5,602	8.0%

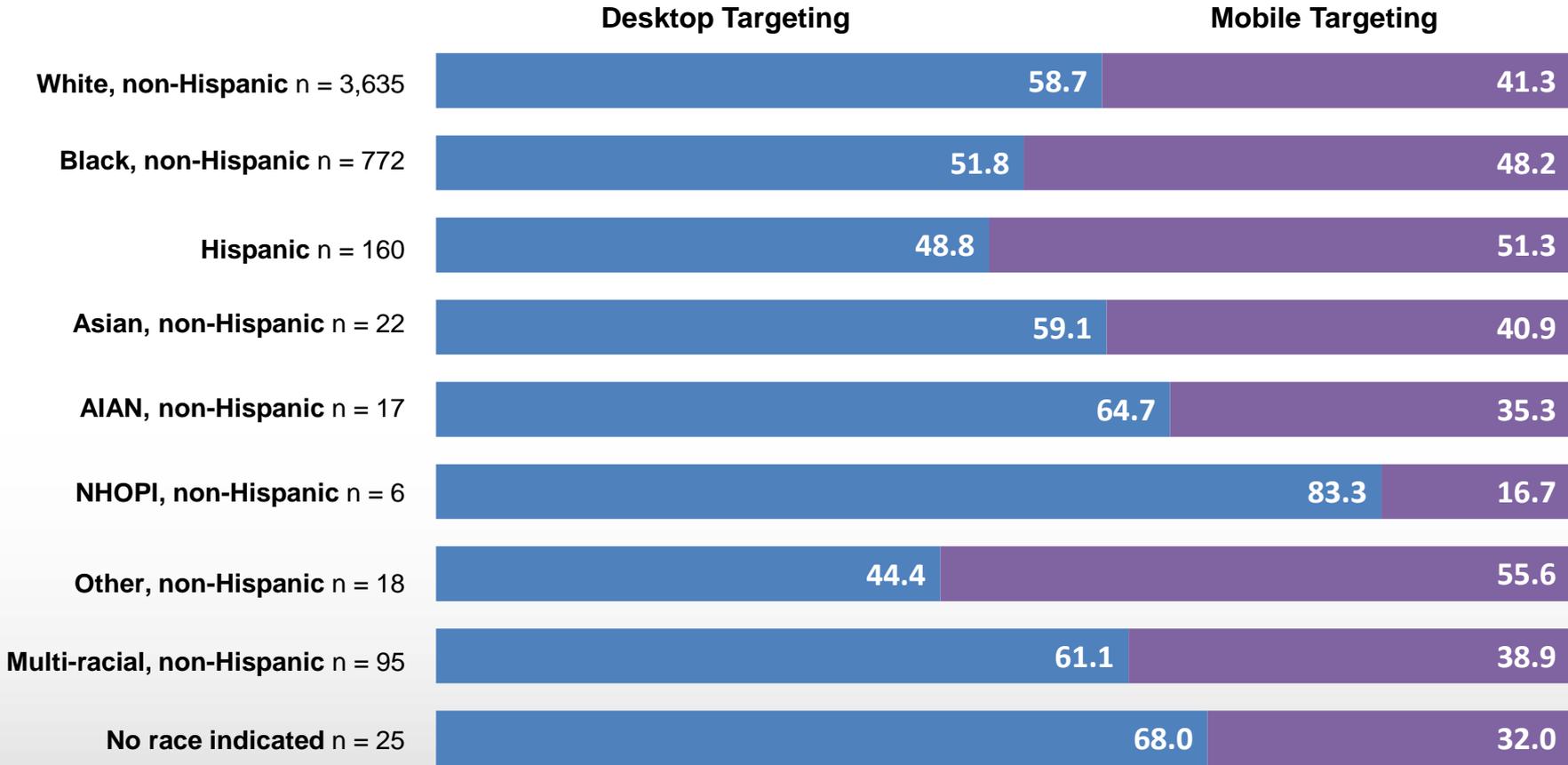
40.1% directly attributable to advertising and communications campaign

Self Response by Mode by Race and Ethnicity – Percent of Total Submissions



High digital engagement across racial and ethnic groups.

Online Response by Device Targeted by Race and Ethnicity – Percent of Total Submissions from Digital Ads



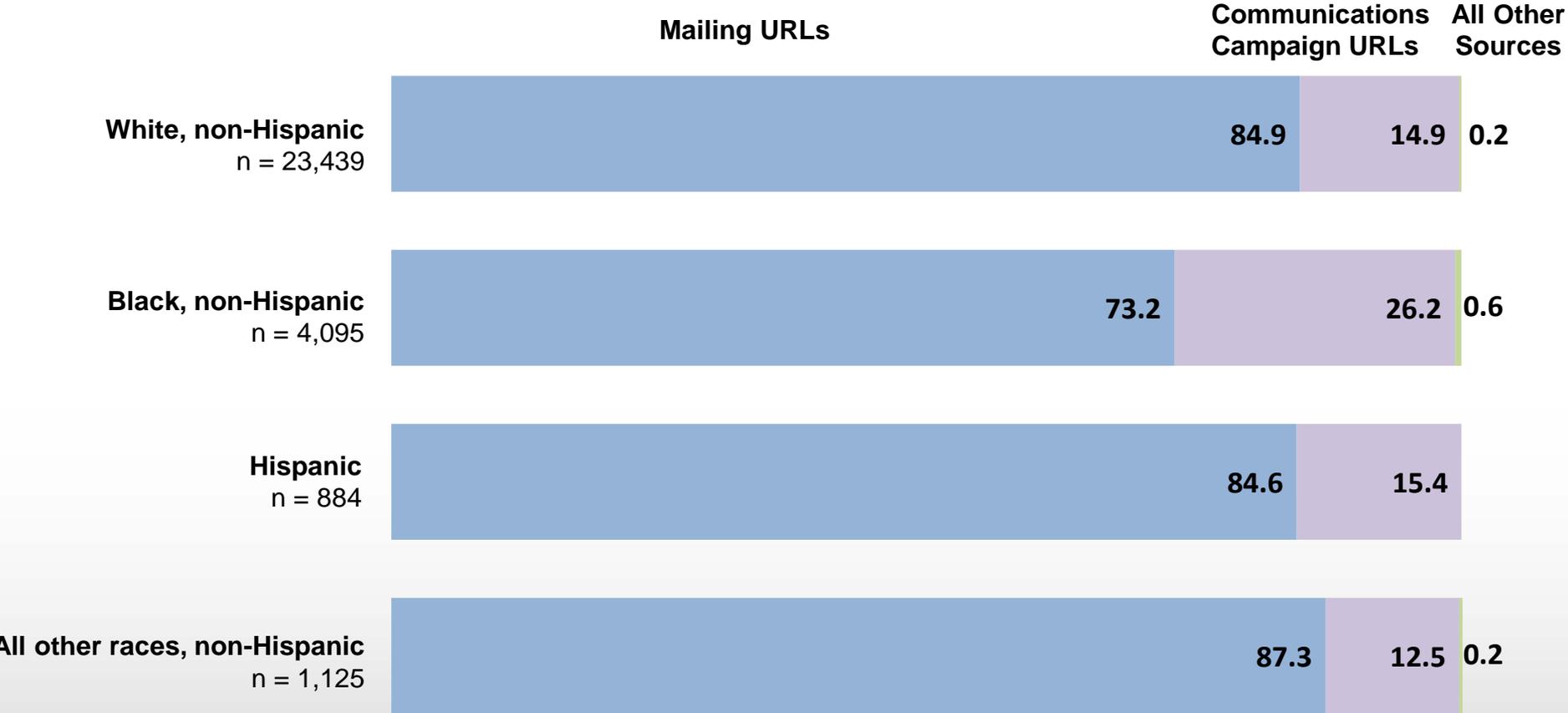
Hispanic participants had one of the highest mobile completion rates when brought to the questionnaire from digital ads.

Response Mode by Mailout Status – Percent of Total Submissions

Mail Treatment	Full Mailout		No Mailout*	
Self Response Mode	Count	Column %	Count	Column %
Total Submissions	44,064	-	23,849	-
Mode: Internet	30,391	69.0%	23,649	99.2%
Blank (largely mailout URL)	25,432	57.7%	1,664	7.0%
Census Vanity URL	3,119	7.1%	15,856	66.5%
Digital Ad Initiated	1,766	4.0%	5,622	23.6%
Partners/Events	40	0.1%	239	1.0%
GovDelivery (email)	34	0.1%	189	0.8%
Postcard URL	1	0.0%	45	0.2%
QR Code (from print ads)	2	0.0%	17	0.1%
OOH SMS	1	0.0%	10	0.0%
Organic Social Media	0	0.0%	5	0.0%
Unidentified	1	0.0%	2	0.0%
Mode: Paper, mail-back	8,461	19.2%	0	0.0%
Mode: Telephone, in-bound	5,212	11.8%	200	0.8%

**Excludes the 30,000 households selected for the Late Postcard*

Response by Source for Mailout Households by Race and Ethnicity – Percent of Total Submissions



African Americans engaged with the communications campaign at higher rates than others.

Late Postcard by Self Response Mode and Source – Percent of Total Submissions

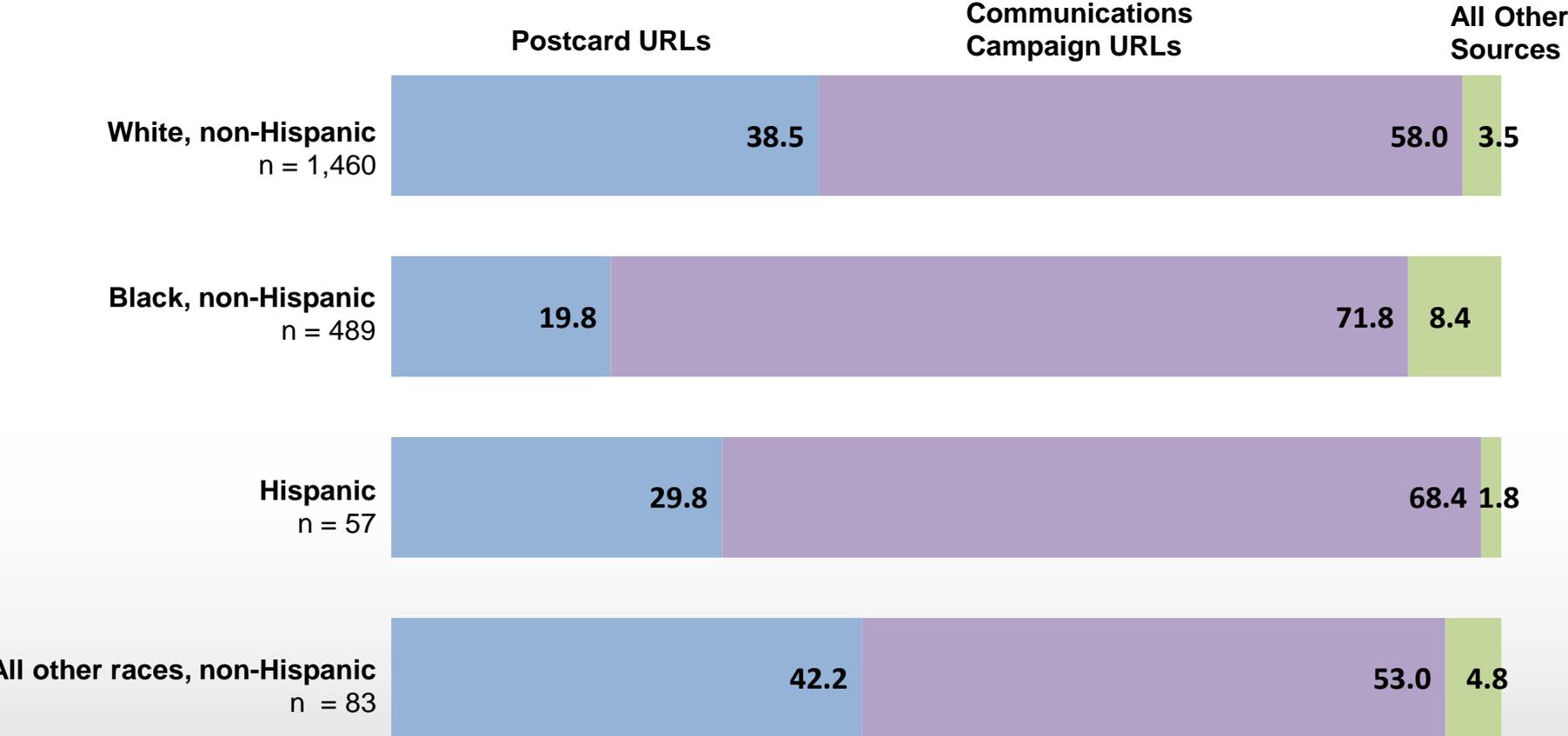
	Late Postcard Status			
	Late Postcard		No Postcard, but Eligible*	
	Count	Column %	Count	Column %
Total Submissions	2,295	100%	10,184	100%
Mode: Internet	2,105	91.7%	10,140	99.6%
Blank (largely mailout URL)	75	3.3%	392	3.8%
Census Vanity URL	973	42.4%	7,237	71.1%
Digital Ad Initiated	316	13.8%	2,246	22.1%
Partners/Events	20	0.9%	198	1.9%
GovDelivery (email)	0	0.0%	15	0.1%
Postcard URL	718	31.3%	35	0.3%
QR Code (from print ads)	0	0.0%	7	0.1%
OOH SMS	1	0.0%	5	0.0%
Organic Social Media	0	0.0%	3	0.0%
Unidentified	2	0.1%	2	0.0%
Mode: Paper, mail-back	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Mode: Telephone, in-bound	190	8.3%	44	0.4%

Late Postcard RR 7.65%
 No Postcard RR 4.05%

Incremental increase in self-response rate from the late postcard was **3.6%** after accounting for communications campaign effects.

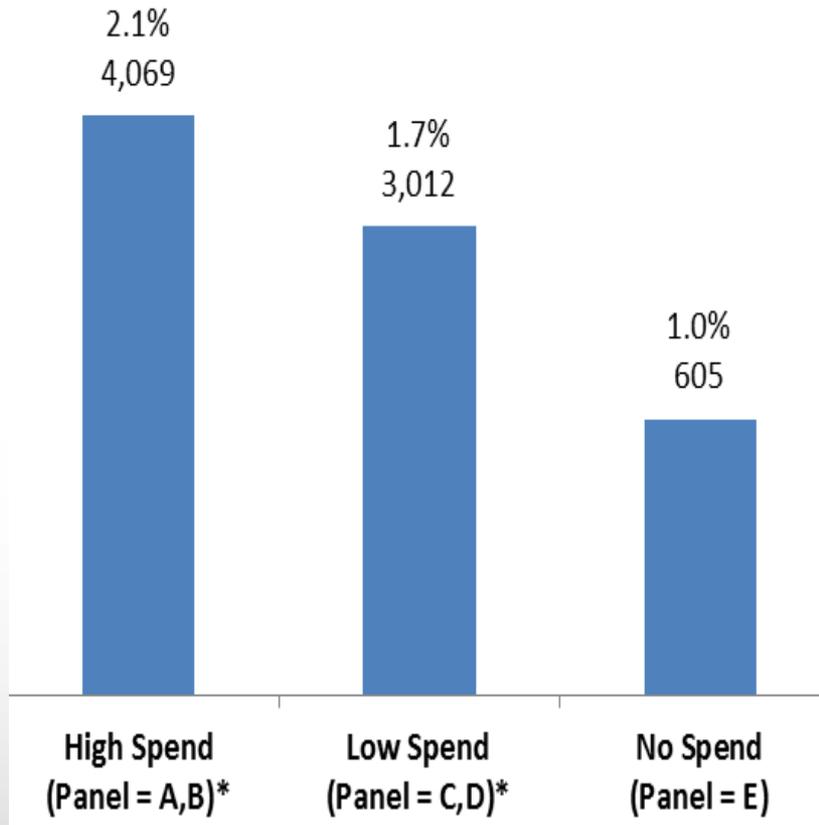
* Note: Eligible households had not responded by April 30th and were not selected to receive the full mailout, a reminder telephone call, or the Late Postcard. They were eligible to be sampled for the Late Postcard.

Response by Source for Late Postcard Households by Race and Ethnicity – Percent of Total Submissions



Black and Hispanic late postcard respondents were motivated by the communications campaign at higher rates.

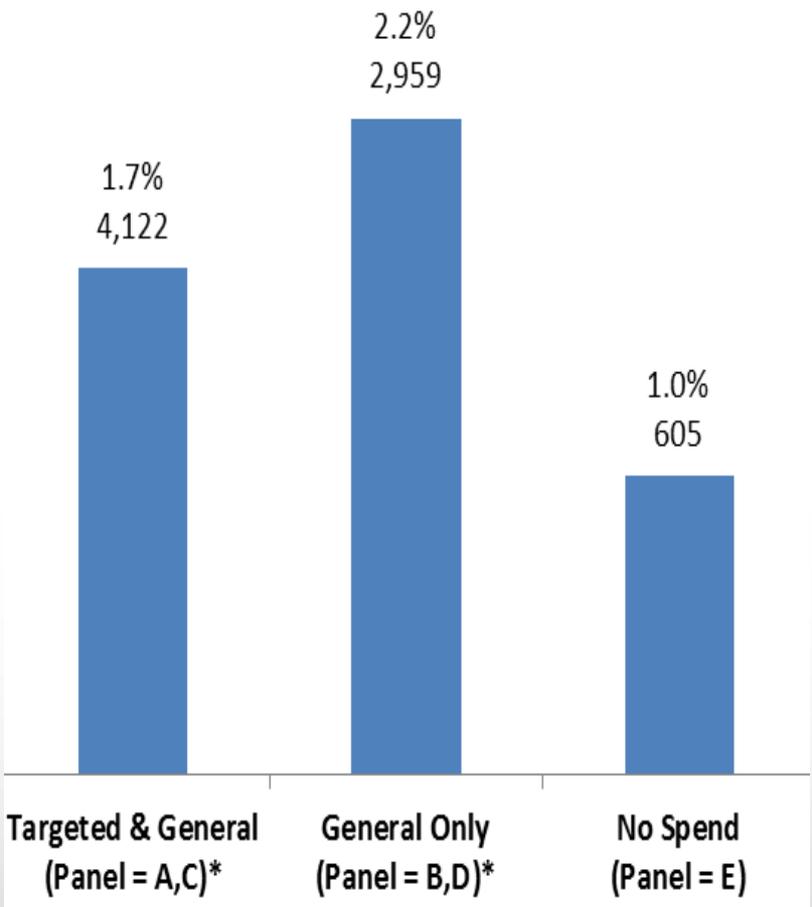
Digital Ad Initiated Response Rates by High/Low Spend Panels



Both high and low spend panels had small but significant impacts on response with respect to the control panel.

**Response rate significantly different from No Spend panel ($p < 0.01$)*

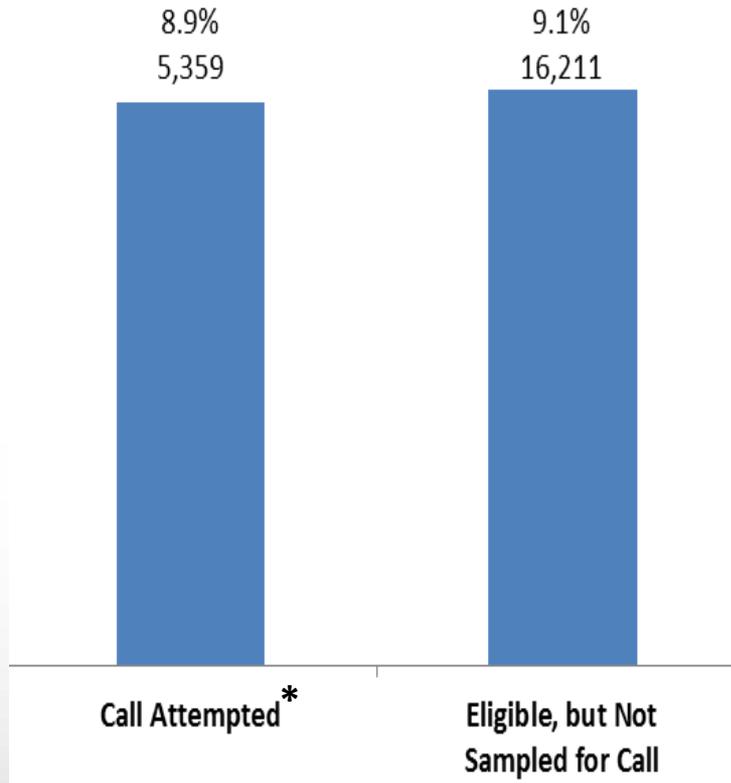
Digital Ad Initiated Response Rates by Targeted/General Advertising Panels



Both digital advertising panels had small but significant impacts on response with respect to the control panel.

*Response rate significantly different from No Spend panel ($p < 0.01$)

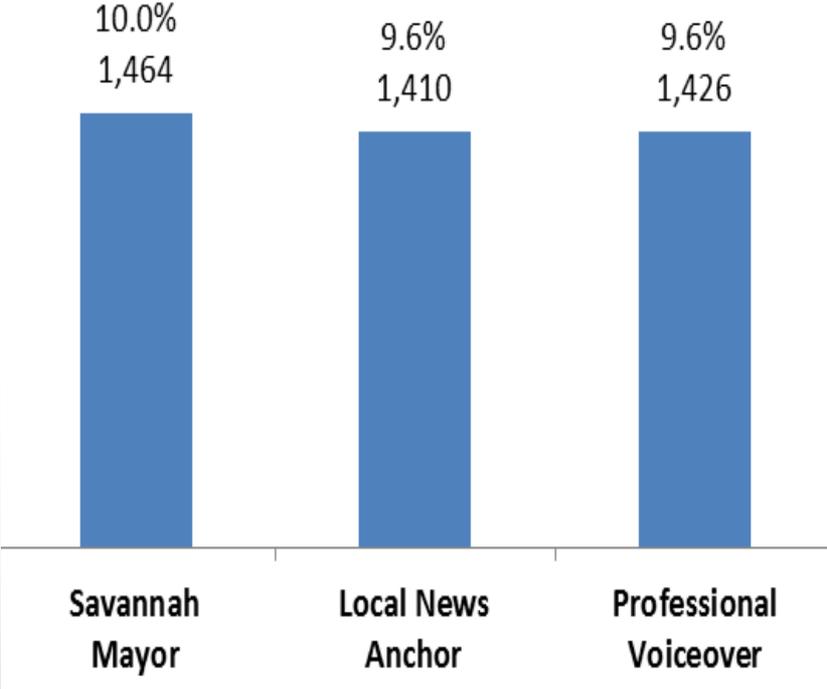
Influencer Call Response Rates



No significant difference in response for households we attempted to call and those eligible but not sampled.

**Difference in response rates not statistically significant*

Response Rates for Successful Call Delivery by Caller Voice



No significant difference in response based on caller voice.

Methodology for Hard-to-Survey Analysis

- Defining hard-to-survey areas in Savannah DMA was based on a Low Response Score, or LRS (Erdman & Bates, 2014)
 - Fitted value from a regression model predicting a tract's mail non-return rate from the 2010 Census
 - Exploratory factor analysis on the 25 LRS variables from the 2014 Census Planning Database – retained 11 of these for input to final factor analysis
 - Two independent factors retained
 1. “Young/Mobile/Renters”
 2. “Female-Headed, Low Income/Education”
 - Savannah tracts with factor scores in the top 10 percent were classified as hard-to-survey areas

Methodology for Hard-to-Survey Analysis

- Need to consider online response as well in defining hard-to-survey, since a major objective of Savannah Test was to encourage online response
 - Tract-level Internet access variable not currently available
 - Examined tract-level 2013 data from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on Internet connectivity
 - Defined Savannah tracts with 0 to 400 HUs per 1,000 connected to residential high-speed Internet as third factor, “Low Internet Connectivity”

Savannah Hard-to-Survey Areas

Size of Hard-to-Survey Groups

	FACTOR			
	Young/ Mobile/ Renter	Female-Headed, Low Income/ Education	Low Internet Connectivity	Total DMA
Number of Tracts	21	20	12	212
Number of HUs in Tracts	26,458	23,865	31,632	439,918

Results – Advertising in Hard-to-Survey Areas

Source of Entry for Online Responses in Full Test Mailout vs. No Mailout

Source	Mailout Panels				No Mailout			
	Young/ Mobile/ Renter	Female-Headed, Low Income/ Education	Low Internet Connectivity	Overall	Young/ Mobile/ Renter	Female-Headed, Low Income/ Education	Low Internet Connectivity	Overall
URLs from Full Test Mailout	86.8%	69.1%	84.2%	83.7%	8.3%	6.2%	6.9%	7.0%
Traditional ads (e.g., TV, radio, print)	8.5%	24.9%	10.6%	10.3%	62.4%	72.0%	67.1%	67.1%
Digital ads	4.4%	5.6%	4.4%	5.8%	26.2%	19.2%	23.5%	23.8%
Other	0.3%	0.4%	0.8%	0.2%	3.2%	2.5%	2.5%	2.1%
Total N	1,331	786	639	30,391	979	1,491	1,181	23,649

Conclusions

- Respondents overwhelmingly favored internet self-response option and minorities were more willing to participate via non-mail communications channels
- Substantial number of submissions resulting from a digital ad click ($\approx 7,700$)
- Verified importance of mailing materials and the interaction between them and communications efforts in driving response
- Overall success with digital targeting accuracy
- Influencer phone calls did not produce significant lifts in response and caller voice had no impact
- General and targeted digital advertising are proving a necessary addition to traditional advertising and mailings for the 2020 Census to increase awareness; to motivate response; to connect respondents directly to the response instrument; and to reach hard-to-survey audiences

Discussion Questions

- In this test, every person who clicked a digital ad or manually typed in the advertising URL arrived at a static landing page; we believe we can improve conversions (click and complete questionnaire vs. click and navigate away) using tailored/targeted landing pages. How can we customize these landing pages to appeal to HTS audiences?
- Considering the new ability to respond digitally and without a preassigned Census ID, what types of events/engagement opportunities do you recommend using to convert constituents in real time?

Questions?

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