



CASE STUDY

How the U.S. Census Bureau Uses Fusion to Bring People and Data Together

The Census Bureau is the leading source of data about the American people, business, and the health of the U.S. economy. Every ten years, the Census Bureau oversees a nationwide census, which helps direct billions in federal, state, and municipal funding along with allocating seats in the House of Representatives. After collecting the extensive amounts of data included in the census, making this data and the resulting reports available to politicians, business leaders, and residents is crucial. The search function on the Census Bureau's website offers a key portal into this information.

Connecting Citizens and Data

"We have a lot of data, documents, and reports available on our site," said David G. Johnson, Website Support Manager at the Census Bureau. "Our site search has to meet both the needs of researchers at government agencies as well as everyday people looking for data and statistics about the world around them."

The existing site search for census.gov was a conventional, full-text search that returned results matched to the documents and data, but suffered from a clunky interface and presentation. Parts of the site would require users to click through several pages of chronological archives to navigate to what they were looking for. Findability was further complicated as metadata and tags were not being included in the ranking of a query's results.

The search team was familiar with Apache Solr and its compatibility with their in-house content management system. They looked at Lucidworks Fusion as a solution since it was built with an Apache Solr core and also offered a broader range of prebuilt components that would speed up development. Along with Fusion, the team considered Elasticsearch, but in the end preferred Fusion's exposed services and architecture, which gave them more flexibility to tune relevance over Elastic's more primitive "black box" approach.

The Challenge

Researchers and residents need fast access to the millions of documents and data that the Census Bureau produces. The existing search suffered from a clunky interface and presentation. Findability was further complicated as metadata and tags were not being included in the ranking of a query's results.

Our Plan

Lucidworks and the Census Bureau partnered to deliver a solution that was fast, scalable, responsive, and relevant and could quickly expand to searching additional parts of the site.

The Results

A new search app that makes finding agency data and documents easier than ever.

Search

[Search Features & Tips](#)

Search results

Web

Image

Video

Contributions to Public Pensions Experience Significant Gains

Note: The dollar amount for total **pension** contributions that public-sector retirees receive for the nation has been corrected and is in bold below...

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2017/cb17-86-public-pensions.html>

Press Kit: 2016 Annual Survey of Public Pensions

Provides a comprehensive look at the financial activity of the nation's state and locally-administered defined benefit **pension** systems...

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-kits/2017/public-pensions.html>

2016 Annual Survey of Public Pensions - American FactFinder

State and Locally-Administered Defined Benefit **Pension** Systems - All Data by State and Level of Government: 2016...

<https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/PP/2016/00A1>

Older Workers, Retirement, and Pensions - Census

Older **Workers, Retirement**, and Pensions A Comparative International Chartbook Kevin Kinsella and Yvonne J. Gist ... **Pension** and Welfare Benefits Administration,...

https://www.census.gov/prod/1/intnl/pc95-2/lpc95_2.pdf

Retirement system - Census

Retirement system. A **pension** plan in which investments, contributions, and benefits are administered as a separate entity independent of the parent government general fund...

https://factfinder.census.gov/help/en/retirement_system.htm

Public Pension Contributions Increase to Close Funding Gaps

Contributions to public pensions have been on a steady rise since 2005, after being relatively flat for a decade. Earnings from those pensions, however, have vacillated up and down. "Variability in earnings seems to have..."

<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2017/08/public-pensions.html>

2016 Census of Governments: Finance Survey of Public ...

employee **pension** systems classified as defined benefit plans. Data are shown for individual **pension** systems as

The new search application built with Lucidworks Fusion provides much more flexibility for users to filter and target their searches faster. Categories and faceting also assist users in quickly getting to the information they are looking for. The application also includes robust dashboards for auditing and logs so content owners know what users are looking for—and if they are successfully finding what they need. The new solution connected to the agency's existing single sign-on architecture and security infrastructure.

"A big part of our job is giving people access to information about their government and country. Lucidworks Fusion gave us the tools our team needed to quickly build and deploy a search application that makes finding agency data and documents easier than ever."

— David G. Johnson, Website Support Manager, U.S. Census Bureau

Get Started or Learn More

For more information or to start using Lucidworks Fusion, contact us today at lucidworks.com/contact or call 415-329-6515.