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## **Censuses communication campaign. Communicate the new permanent population census. The Istat experience.**

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### *Abstract*

From 2016, Istat has begun the rollout of the Permanent Census of Population and Economic Units which involves carrying out continuous surveys at yearly, biennial and triennial intervals, and not every ten years. Unlike the past, the strategy of permanent censuses, in line with European development policies, will not involve all citizens, enterprises and institutions, but some of them as a representative samples.

To support this radical change, in 2018 Istat planned an integrated communication campaign: four integrated communication strategies for every census (Population, Enterprises, Public Institution and Non-Profit). The use of a direct, familiar and engaging communication has been the choice that oriented the creative project, but also led the definition of channels, languages and communication formats. The campaign started Population census and was very innovative for the intense use of social networks, the style "web comedy" and ironic of web star (The Jackal); the simplification of information through infographics and video tutorials; the engagement favoured by a system of contests and "gamification"; the use of web communities to promote the contest; the dissemination of information via bloggers and influencers; the participation in events of great popularity and, at the same time, the organization of local meetings.

To "enlarge" the communication and involve the new generations through the help of contests and specific initiatives, the contents of the censuses animated also the social channels and viral campaigns have been launched on Istat's social channels, and a thematic page on Facebook has been opened "Istat Censuses day by day". All solutions have been designed to bring Istat to the citizen, to encourage the establishment of a relationship of trust, of dialogue and, therefore, of involvement. At the end of the operations, more than 92% of families involved completed the questionnaire. A great participation, thanks also to straight and pervasive communication campaign.

# CENSUSES COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN. COMMUNICATE THE NEW PERMANENT POPULATION CENSUS. THE ISTAT EXPERIENCE.

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## INTRODUCTION

From 2016, Istat has begun the rollout of the permanent census of population and economic units which involves the carrying out of continuous surveys at yearly, biennial and triennial intervals, and not every ten years. The strategy of permanent censuses, in line with European development policies and the ISTAT modernization programme, covers major thematic areas: population and housing, enterprises, non-profit institutions and public institutions. Unlike the past, the strategy of permanent censuses doesn't involve all citizens, enterprises and institutions, but some of them as a representative sample. However, the data disseminated over the Country will be census data, and therefore referable to the entire field of the survey, thanks to the integration of administrative sources with sample surveys.

To support this radical change, in 2018 Istat planned an integrated campaign of communication for Permanent Censuses, that integrated four campaigns, one for each census (Population, Enterprises, Public Institution and Non-Profit), into a single project.

With the profound changes introduced by the new permanent census season, Istat had the need to explain the new features and advantages, to create a favourable climate for census operations. It has therefore implemented a communicative strategy with a strong institutional value, aimed above all at confrontation and dialogue with citizens and users, with a view to transparency and sharing.

A communication campaign on the new Censuses has represented more than just an information and awareness campaign: it has been a unique opportunity for ISTAT to strengthen and further define its reputation as the "official guarantor" of the correct management of an increasingly precious and delicate "asset" such as "data". This is an even more important opportunity, given that it took place in a context of overproduction and information confusion. But the communication campaign was at the same time a complex and delicate operation in a socio-political context characterized by a general distrust towards the Institutions and by a suspicious attitude towards the processing of one's own data.

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## 1. AN INNOVATIVE STRATEGY OF COMMUNICATION

Targeted on the architecture and phases of each census operation and segmented according to the different targets and stakeholders, the Communication Campaign on permanent censuses has envisaged the creation of a unique narration, able to involve not only those called to respond to censuses but also those who benefit from their results, keeping a high attention on the census operation, in a logic of dialogue and interaction with the different categories of users/stakeholders. A story that is easy to remember and share because it concerns the life of the entire community, a story that can lead back to an immediately identifiable atmosphere, and to tell and explain how each individual census collects and measures the fundamental characteristics of the country and how important it is to respond.

Therefore, the main goals of the communication campaign have been:

- **Explain** the importance of the census as a source of information for the governance
- **Multiply** the information/ **Ensuring** visibility, recognition and memorability
- **Inform** how to carry out the operations/ **Encourage** the participation
- **Promote** correctness, completeness and timeliness of answers
- **Inform** on the increase of quantity and quality of data
- **Communicate** the reduction of the response burden for citizens
- **Communicate** the reduction of the overall costs
- **Multiply** the message through networking/partnership with stakeholders

To achieve these objectives, the challenge was therefore to promote a strategy of communication and dissemination of statistical data according to a cross-media approach, integrated and synergistic between new media, social channels, institutional website and other web services, to develop new communication systems able to reach a greater number of users, a treatment of viral content, to which entrust a multiplier effect and to stimulate participation in the census.

In the first place, it is been defined the **identity** and the **brand** of Permanent Censuses that is been characterized by a compact logo, with simplified icons and various colors that identify different census: a real visual map, where each single logo represents the part a whole system.



The solution was the construction of a real "constellation" of tools, a multilateral and interconnected system where each element interacting with the other, has enhanced the effects by putting them back into "circulation" and maximizing those principles of convergence and cross-media fundamentals in mixed digital and traditional campaign. An integrated campaign that is in fact articulated in four connected sub-campaigns, but partially different in target and characterizing key messages.

The use of a direct, familiar and engaging communication has been the choice that oriented the creative project, but also led the definition of channels, languages and communication formats. The intense use of social networks, the style "web comedy" and ironic of The Jackal, the simplification of information through infographics and videotutorial, the engagement favored by a system of contests and "gamification", the use of web communities to promote the contest, the dissemination of information via bloggers and influencers, the participation in events of great popularity and, at the same time, the organization of local meetings, are all solutions that have been designed to bring Istat to the citizen, to encourage the establishment of a relationship of trust, of dialogue and, therefore, of involvement.

Along with this, viral campaigns on Istat social channels have been launched and a thematic page on Facebook has been opened: "Istat Censuses day by day". Both off line and on line activities, together with special projects, have been collected and integrate in the dedicated website: [www.censimentigiornodopogiorno.it](http://www.censimentigiornodopogiorno.it).

## **2. THE STRATEGIC AND CREATIVE CONCEPT**

The sample and representative character of the new censuses represented the conceptual focus around which to build a storytelling that would make the entire census operation recognizable and memorable and at the same time encourage the widest possible involvement. Thanks to its semantic breadth, however, the concept of representativeness introduced with the generalist campaign lends itself to being coherently and effectively declined on the individual campaigns. The concept of representativeness - in addition to having an undoubted statistical value - gives respondents a social responsibility, a collaborative and participatory value, which goes far beyond the legal obligation normally required and in any case also required for the new Census.

The specific key message of the campaign for the Population Census therefore becomes that "every citizen counts as a representative of the other citizens and of the whole of Italy".

This connotation has been able to generate a wide range of narrative possibilities, able to insert itself in a coherent way in the general macro-narrative of a country that represents itself through the "minimal and individual narration", but highly significant, of its parts.

The *leitmotiv* of the entire campaign recalls the concept of closeness to people and to their daily lives: **Italy needs champions to build up its future!**

The **creative concept** plays on the double meaning of “statistical champions” and “sports champions”. The census champions are people who, in their daily family or professional life, represent an entire country. The second part of the claim indicates the value and cognitive contribution of the census related to the population.



The other conceptual pivot of the campaign, closely connected to the other deep innovation introduced in the census surveys, is represented by the concept of **"permanent"** taken up in the **pay off** that signs the entire campaign.

**"Italy day after day"** expresses in a colloquial and reassuring way a universal phrase that indicates closeness and refers to a daily life that should be guided towards the future, just as ISTAT does with its commitment to accompany the country towards more informed and targeted choices.

**"Permanent"** and **"sample"** were therefore the creative keys of the entire communication campaign. From the creative concept emerged a creative universe, a **"discursive constellation"**: a choral spot that tells the Italy of the "champions" in an engaging and delicate way; variations able to maintain the emotional atmosphere of the spot while introducing a substantial information component; a system of digital actions and tools based on an increasingly intimate and personal **H2H (human to human) approach** that allows you to establish a direct relationship with your targets; a **social media strategy** rich in content with **high viral potential and engagement** and specific for all targets and all phases of the plan.

### 3. COMMUNICATE THE NEW PERMANENT POPULATION CENSUS

**December 20th, 2018, with more than 92% of the questionnaire completed**, the first wave of the Permanent Census of the population and households has ended. A significant result, which has concurred to a communication campaign strongly pervasive and detailed, that was able to get to a heavily pulverized primary target.

The beginning of the Permanent Census of the population represented, not only for ISTAT, but for the whole Italy, an epochal passage in a statistic-procedural point of view and also in a social, cultural and, in some ways, political points of view.

The communication campaign was built following an integrated, articulated and flexible logic in the functioning of the various dimension, channels, and languages also in relation to the specific plans of communication:

- ADVERTISING PLAN
- SOCIAL DIGITAL PLAN
- CLASSIC AND DIGITAL PR PLAN
- PRESS OFFICE PLAN
- PLACEMENT PLAN

The creative concept, subjected to a preliminary investigation, resulted into functionality and efficiency, aiming to raise the attention level towards the Census and to warm up the informative tone, making it more accessible. The great response registered on all the activities put into the field, lead to the functionality of the plans used, encouraging important endorsement actions.

Without a doubt, the adopted communication strategy was unusual for ISTAT. It involved not only the classic methods of the informative operations of territorial direct marketing, but also the social media campaign, influencer marketing and digital pr. The choice of experimenting new meeting spaces with different targets involved, along with the usage of new communicative platforms, more in line with the current trend of communication, allowed the campaign to become a real best practice in the of the Italian Public Administration's world.

The ability to use media, in particular the digital ones, led to reach unexpected levels of coverage, considering that the number of impressions of the digital campaign has exceeded 58 million.

In any case such a diffusion was guaranteed also by a series of activities carried out on the national territory, such as the initiatives organized by Istat for the Italian Statistics Day. This also involved the main Italian universities in 35 events and the 44 Census points distributed on medium-sized stations, fundamental junctions for travelers, as well as a campaign with a local vocation of radio, press, TV, web and social media.

The communication support and the consistency in the management of information transfer processes towards the territory was also guaranteed by a strong attention provided by the

communication campaign towards the institutional PRs: Municipalities, Prefectures.

This campaign interacted differently with the primary target, namely, a very diverse population, differentiated within its competence, cognitive needs and medial diet; moreover it was direct even to the ones that we have defined **multipliers**, subjects able to amplify and spread the message further, and **facilitators**, subjects able to contribute to the general efficiency of the communicative process.

#### 4. EXECUTIVE PLAN

The population census campaign is part of a communication container created for all permanent censuses: a choral story based on the representativeness and value of each.

The communication campaign was divided into 4 macro-phases, which accompanied the entire survey process, from the end of September to December 20th, 2018:

##### 1. LAUNCH PHASE

- Presentation press conference of both permanent census and population and households census in order to involve the information world and use it as a sounding board for the public opinion
- Media relations over the national and local media outlets
- Advertising plan involving the classic and digital media (through the channeling of different formats: TV and radio advertise, press format and the internet)
- Institutional plans featuring RAI radio and TV spaces granted from the Presidency of the Council of Ministers
- Placement plan on RAI's principal information TV stations
- Dedicated online page listing all the current activities, spreading the knowledge about the census and getting the users closer to the statistics
- Facebook page dedicated to creating an extensive and varied community of reference in order to complement the social institutional channels.
- Institutional public relations' actions for the purpose of an active involvement of the 2008 Municipalities involved within the census with the diffusion of informative material (multimedia kit) and the support of the communication actions put into field by the Municipalities.
- Realization of 35 territorial events achieved during the VIII Italian day of Statistics over the entire national territory mainly directed to a young target and dedicated to the new Population Census
- The creation of a networking channel of institutional partners (Municipalities and Prefectures) through the dispatch of letters of intent and operational support
- Definition of the Crisis management plan for the handling of the main critical situations incurred in the start-up phase of the survey (Privacy Guarantor, detectors, IT deficit)

##### 2. SUPPORT PLAN

- Finalization of the advertising plan amongst the most functional channels for the campaign, also through remarketing and programmatic operations
- Activation of 44 Census points, information points in medium-sized stations, main junctions of the flow of travelers within the Italian territory
- 892 Census Boxes, shipment of promotional material on the Census to be used by Municipalities exceeding 10.000 inhabitants in support of the UCC

- Digital Pr: video and photographic contests for the involvement of the population through the storytelling of their own "champion's day"
- Corporate presence at the date of Rome DeeJay Ten, a sporting event of great appeal that has served as a communicative driving force of the permanent census of the population
- Specific actions aimed at the main foreign communities in Italy (language customized web banner campaign, influencers' marketing, language customized preparation of pages on the dedicated website, specific media relation actions)
- Institutional PR with the participation at the 35th edition of the ANCI Annual Meeting (Rimini) and an endorsement project with the Mayors on site and informational support provided to the experts

### 3. REINFORCEMENT/BACKUP PHASE

- Specific action addressed to the local press through the dissemination of an ad hoc press release to encourage the return of online questionnaires
- Geolocalized Facebook Advertising actions on those Municipalities with greater difficulties in returning the questionnaires from the list
- Institutional PR with participation in the 38th National Anusca Conference (AbanoTerme) providing support to the Registry Offices' managers
- Institutional PR through the involvement of the press and communication offices of the main Municipalities with a response rate lower than the national average's one, through the sharing of targeted communication methods (letter of intent, kit composed of pre-packaged messages ready for use)
- Communication plan both on the website and social media as an incentive for the participation of latecomers for the completion of the permanent census of the population
- Specific action addressed to the national and local press to guide the last phases of the permanent census of the population

### 4. CLOSING PHASE

- Communication plan both on the website and social media in order to communicate the completion of the permanent census of the population
- Specific action addressed to the national and local press in order to communicate the completion of the permanent census of the population.

## 5. SPECIAL PROJECTS: TO INVOLVE AND ENGAGE

As anticipated, the communication campaign was based on a perfect mix of traditional media and innovative media, to ensure the widest diffusion of messages, but needed to reach also those generalist targets, for which television or family is still the only source of information.

Infact children and young people constitute an extraordinary vehicle of information addressed to the families, as well as being themselves the recipients of this information.

For these reasons Istat promoted two special projects, a special plan of placement and a project with schools, to reinforce the messages and support the campaign of communication.

### 5.1 ISTAT-RAI CONVENTION: PLAN OF PLACEMENT TV

Therefore, in June 2018, ISTAT signed an agreement with the Italian public television RAI, defining a Placement Plan which included the presence on TV programs of Infotainment and placement in a popular fiction in the period from October to -November 2018.

Purpose of the convention was to bring the Census into Italian homes through the most pervasive means, but also provide wide dissemination of the Census participation modalities, encouraging proper behaviors carried out by citizens.

The Plan contemplated 3 types of interventions by type and duration, against which different messages should have been calibrated:

- Very short messages of 1 minute each, in transmission with a medium high share: THE HERITAGE (2 quotes)
- Wide sessions, up to three minutes, in general "informative" broadcasts, studied together with the authors of the program.
- Quotations of the Census on a widely spread Fiction of "RaiTre": UN POSTO AL SOLE (4 quotes)

Considering that the reference date of the census was 7th October 2018, the planning had guaranteed ISTAT coverage and presence, with different "intensities", especially in the start-up and reinforcement/backup phase.



- UNOMATTINA
- UNOMATTINA IN FAMIGLIA
- SERENO VARIABILE
- LA VITA IN DIRETTA
- L'EREDITÀ



- I FATTI VOSTRI



- UN POSTO AL SOLE

## 5.2 CHALLENGES 2019: BRINGING THE CENSUS TO SCHOOL DESKS

ISTAT's mission is to produce high quality statistical information, analysis and forecasts, in order to develop an in-depth knowledge of the environmental, economic and social reality of Italy, at different territorial levels. Based on this mandate and as part of the "Integrated communication campaign for permanent censuses", ISTAT has foreseen a series of specific initiatives for young people, with the aim of raising awareness and inform new generations about the innovations introduced by the permanent censuses.

For the dissemination of Permanent Censuses, in particular the Population and Households Census, Istat proposed a collaboration with the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) for the realization of a communication project named "Permanent census among schoolchildren", to be realized from October 2019 to February 2020.

Focused on the theme "census and territory", the project provides an interdisciplinary training course, aimed at creating a storytelling product that, starting from the use of statistical data, allows students to learn about and tell about their territory from the demographic, geographical, social, cultural, economic view using data provided by ISTAT surveys and censuses.

### Main objectives

- raise awareness and inform new generations of the profound innovations introduced by permanent censuses;
- to spread the knowledge of the Census and of the participation methods of the sample families;
- increase awareness of the usefulness of statistics for reading and understanding territorial phenomena;
- improve the ability to use the data for the representation of demographic, social, economic and cultural phenomena.

### Target

- Primary School, pupils of grades III-IV-V,
- Lower secondary school, pupils of grades I-II-III

### Trails (in) training

- Teachers: package of tools for transmitting content to pupils
- Students: introductory modules for all orders and modules differentiated by school order

## 6. THE NUMBERS OF THE CAMPAIGN AND CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of the first three months of the campaign showed that the ability to use the media, in particular the digital ones, made it possible to reach unexpected levels of coverage. The following is a summary of the "numbers" that the various actions put in place have produced.

<b>ADV CAMPAIGN</b>	
WEB BANNER AND VIDEO CAMPAIGN	58.967.769 impression
TV CAMPAIGN	747.816 spot
RADIO CAMPAIGN	6290 spot
PLACEMENT PUBLIC TELEVISION RAI	12,5% average share of the television broadcasting
<b>WEBSITE AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT</b>	
WEBSITE: CENSIMENTIGIORNODOPOGIORNO.IT	286.899 visualization - 228.747 uniqueaccesses
FACEBOOK	5.038.894 total coverage of the channel
INTERACTIVE GAMES	25.245 impressions, 400 interactions
CONTEST VIDEO: L'ITALIA HA BISOGNO DI CAMPIONI	234.293 impressions, 168 interactions, 49 video
CONTEST INSTAGRAM: #UNGIORNODACAMPIONE	398.282 impressions, 197 interactions, 710 photo
OPERATION WITH WEB STAR: THE JACKAL	6.423.822 totalcoverage of the video
<b>PR &amp; DIGITAL PR</b>	
INFLUENCER MARKETING	10.699.485 totalcoverage with 24 influencer
LOCAL EVENTS ORGANIZED BY ISTAT	+ 2500 contacts
CENSUS POINT 44 ITALIAN RAILSTATIONS	5.850 contacts, 24.545 distributed flyer
FIERA ANCI RIMINI (FAIR-CONFERENCES FOR MUNICIPALITIES)	108 contacts, 1.300 distributed flyer
38° CONVEGNO ANUSCA (CONVENTIONS OF DEMOGRAPHERS)	400 contacts, 500 distributed flyer
DEEJEY TEN TAPPA DI ROMA – RUNNING EVENT	500 contacts, 13.500 distributedmaterials