

# Claritas Cable Boundaries 2020 Summary Methodology

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## OVERVIEW

This document provides an overview of the methodology used in the Claritas Cable Boundaries update. Claritas has a proven track record as an industry leader producing quality data, and maintains this position by continually innovating and improving upon the methodology used for our product updates. The Claritas Cable Boundaries update provides such an example with the use of data elements from the Nielsen FOCUS database. The data inputs will allow the Claritas Cable Boundaries data set to better define the cable service area landscape with an overview of incumbent and overbuilder service areas.

**Note:** With the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) deregulation allowed for more competition in the communications marketplace. Specifically, the FCC allowed companies to build new infrastructure in areas where communication services existed. This regulatory change opened the marketplace to allow for overlapping cable service providers (overbuilders) in the same geographic area where incumbent providers already provided service.

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## BOUNDARY CREATION PROCESS

The FOCUS database is an industry leading solution, providing the most up-to-date information on cable systems and alternate delivery systems (ADS). This database tracks changes in the cable industry and provides information on individual cable headends. (A cable headend is the originating point of a cable operation where incoming signals are processed for transmission to customers.) The data is collected by Nielsen through canvases of cable headend operators conducted throughout each year. With each update of the Claritas Cable Boundaries data set, an extract of the FOCUS data is used for the creation of, and inclusion in, the Claritas Cable Boundaries data set.

The FOCUS source data provides definitions for cable areas at the ZIP Code level. Nielsen surveys all cable providers on a rotating schedule to inquire about their service territory. The cable providers respond with a list of ZIP Codes where they offer service.

Claritas assigns cable headends to one of three boundary layers, based on the overbuilder status indicator in the FOCUS source data. Each of these layers is treated as a separate geographic level:

- Cable Incumbents (CBL) – territories that existed prior to 1996

- Cable Overbuilders Major (CBM) - AT&T or Verizon, built over existing incumbent territories
- Cable Overbuilders Minor (CBN) - all other overbuilders excluding AT&T and Verizon, built over existing incumbent territories

Using a proprietary geographic coding process, the cable headends are matched with the geographic areas they claim to serve, or have franchised, to define cable headend coverage areas. These coverage areas are defined by Claritas as aggregations of census block groups. Note that the boundaries reflect the most detailed geographic definition that can be determined for a headend based on the data that describes where the cable headend currently does business. In some cases, the geographic definition of a cable headend might extend beyond the actual service area; in other cases, the boundary might not capture the complete coverage area due, in some instances, to competitive scenarios. Both of these situations are to be expected with this product. As a result, while these boundaries are effective for marketing purposes, they are not intended for engineering applications.

As part of the process to delineate cable boundaries, the current methodology analyzes the FOCUS source data to identify ZIP Codes claimed by multiple cable providers. The methodology then assigns every block group to one cable system per boundary layer, using the Claritas block group to ZIP Code cross-reference. The resulting block group to cable definitions are then used to aggregate block group boundaries to cable boundaries.

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## TECHNICAL SUPPORT

For more information, please contact Environics Analytics at 1.888.339.3304 or [inquiries@environicsanalytics.com](mailto:inquiries@environicsanalytics.com).

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## LEGAL NOTIFICATIONS

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