The way you keep track of your clientele is central to your business and is crucial to your profitability.

Total Address Quality

Any organization or company that relies on the integrity of their data can benefit.

Think about the way that you gather your customer information and how you want to store it. This white paper walks you through the information you need to think about to confidently manage your customer database with Total Address Quality.

The Path to Total Address Quality

Accurate Customer Data Is Critical to Your Business

Whether you are a financial institution, online retail store, call center, mailing house, foundation or indeed any type of business that handles customer contact information, you know that the way you manage that information can directly impact your profitability and the strength of your business. You understand the importance of accurate contact information and have probably given a lot of thought into how you would best manage your customer database.

In an ever-changing world, software and services are evolving to meet the requests of clients. Your goal, like ours, is to find the best possible solution for the needs of your organization.

If you already have the best systems in place to maximize the quality of your customer data, congratulations. But if you aren't sure, know you have an outdated system or are noticing more and more errors, the chances are that you are open to the idea of a change. A good way to check is to speak with your customer service departments and mail rooms. Are you getting returned packages? Is mail being sent back? Are your direct marketing campaigns generating sufficient ROI? Is your customer service team fielding calls from customers complaining about lost or late deliveries? How much is all of this costing your business, in terms of time, delivery costs and damaged reputation?

Why Your Customer Information May Not Be Accurate

The fact is that customer contact data is often incomplete or incorrect from the moment the data is captured. For example, vital address information may be missing when a customer places an order from a catalog, they may transpose numbers in a ZIP Code when filling out an online order form, spell a street name incorrectly, or errors may occur during data entry at a call center.

Furthermore, even if all the data is captured correctly, the quality of this information will still deteriorate over time. Customers may move without telling you, ZIP Codes may be changed or reassigned, streets get renamed etc. Best practices suggest that you not only verify data before it enters your system, but also routinely maintain and update that data over time.

Here are a few of the ways you can benefit from an address quality program.

Greater Operating Efficiency
It costs much less to correct addresses than trying to fix issues that arise throughout your organization once those bad addresses enter your system.

Lower Mailing & Shipping Costs
Qualify for postal discounts, cut down on wasted time and money caused by undeliverable packages and save on expensive Address Correction Penalties charged by shipping carriers.

Customer Satisfaction
Lost or late deliveries due to inaccurate address data damage your reputation and hurt your business. Online address validation on customer-facing sites leaves a positive impression with your customers, who can see that you care about getting things right.

Helps to Fight Fraud
Verifying addresses prior to accepting orders through your website can help fight against fraudulent purchases.

Increased Marketing ROI
Enjoy higher delivery rates and less returned mail. You may even qualify for significant postal discounts when you validate your addresses prior to sending.

Implementing A Total Address Quality Program

Your address data exhibits Total Address Quality when it meets three conditions - it is **complete, correct** and **current.**

- ✓ <u>Complete</u> addresses contain all elements for your mail to be delivered, from street numbers to the ZIP + 4® codes.
- ✓ <u>Correct</u> addresses not only contain all the right address elements, but are also actual validated deliverable addresses.
- ✓ <u>Current</u> addressing considers whether the addressee is still at the same address that is on file.

Total address quality is not only about cleaning the address data in your system to meet the very latest Postal Service standards, it is about your data moving through four steps.

Step 1) **Standardize** - Correct, parse and standardize your address data by comparing it to the very latest USPS data, adding ZIP+4 info and highlighting possible costly duplicates.

Step 2) **Validate** – An address quality solution should have built-in DPV® and LACSLink® so that you can be sure each address is a deliverable location, conforming to the latest USPS addressing standards.

Step 3) **Update** - Utilize the latest NCOALink® data from the Postal Service to update the addresses of any movers in your database.

Step 4) **Enhance** - Bring added value to your database by providing additional data such as Lat/long coordinates, Carrier Route information, Line of Travel, Congressional Districts, County Codes and more. Use RDI (Residential Delivery Indicator) data to distinguish between residential/business addresses.

Point of Entry vs Batch Address Verification?

Point of entry address validation occurs *before* an address enters your database – whether that address is entered by your customer on a Web form or shopping cart, by a customer service rep during a phone call, or a data entry employee entering data from offline sources. Addresses are validated in real time, missing or incorrect elements added or flagged, and each address is standardized according to USPS standards before it hits your database. In the process, you are creating an address quality firewall for your organization.

Example of a point-of-entry address verification solution in the Cloud

Batch address validation occurs across a list of addresses, or even across your entire database. Sophisticated address verification software compares each address against the national postal database and makes the necessary adjustments and standardizations to that data. In addition, these addresses can also be run against the **National Change of Address (NCOA)** database to update the addresses of any customers that have moved since you captured their information. Batch address validation is often used as both a starting point for an address quality program, to cleanse your address database, as well as for ongoing maintenance.

Many organizations find that it is critical to validate contact information both at the point of entry, to prevent unwanted mix-ups and missed deliveries to new customers or prospects, in addition to continuing with a regular maintenance program, to ensure that they don't lose the connection with their customers in sales, marketing and other communication channels.

On-Premise or In the Cloud?

So you know that you need an address verification program, and whether you require batch address correction, point-of-entry validation, or both. But how do you go about implementing this technology? What are your options and what is right for your business?
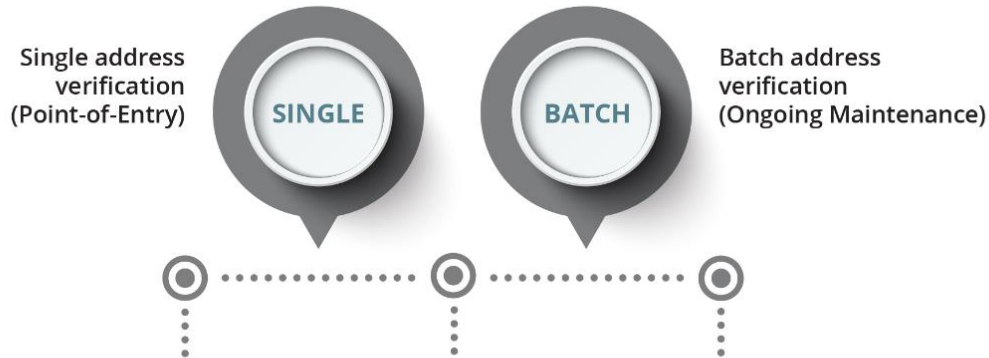
Think about the way that you gather your customer information and how you want to store it. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you need address verification to be integrated into an existing application e.g. a CRM application, Shipping system or a Call Center application, or do you need a standalone application with its own UI?
- Do your organizational policies require that all customer data be processed internally, or are you comfortable with validating addresses across a secure connection in the Cloud?
- Do you have an on-premise IT team that can manage and update your computers or servers with the latest national databases?
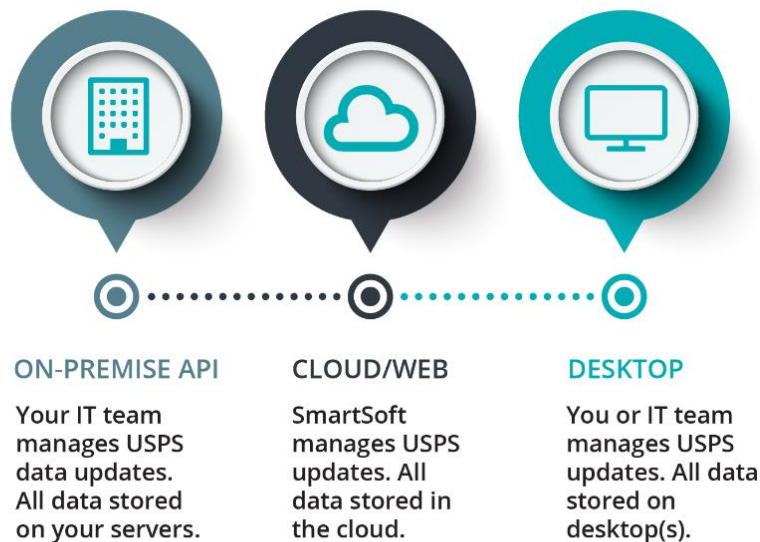
DEPLOYMENT OPTIONS

-CHOOSE WHEN-

Single address
verification
(Point-of-Entry)

SINGLE

BATCH

Batch address
verification
(Ongoing Maintenance)

-CHOOSE HOW-

ON-PREMISE API

Your IT team
manages USPS
data updates.
All data stored
on your servers.

CLOUD/WEB

SmartSoft
manages USPS
updates. All
data stored in
the cloud.

DESKTOP

You or IT team
manages USPS
updates. All data
stored on
desktop(s).

Your answers will help determine the best way to implement your address hygiene program. SmartSoft offers both standalone desktop applications and APIs designed to help you integrate address verification into both internal and web servers. You can choose to manage data updates yourself or use our cloud technologies to verify addresses over the web through a secure connection to one of our address verification servers.

Why wait? Contact us today and see how Total Address Quality can work for you.

ABOUT SMARTSOFTDQ

SmartSoftDQ is a subsidiary of Datatech SmartSoft Inc., a leading provider of workflow management software, offering desktop, cloud-based and on-premise enterprise-level solutions for address correction, postal discounts, and print workflow automation, for the United States and Canada.

SmartSoft has been one of the most trusted address validation experts for over 20 years, and provides address verification solutions to Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, financial institutions, not-for-profit organizations, major online retailers and a whole host of other businesses.

As a USPS® Certified vendor, we go through a rigorous certification process, which requires us to get certified annually. We provide a range of products and services designed to enhance the value of your customer contact information, including:

Address Validation and Standardization – addresses are validated against the USPS database for accuracy, and missing or incorrect elements corrected, and ZIP+4® codes added.

NCOALink® – keep your address database up to date as your customers move, using the latest NCOALink data from USPS.

Geocoding – assign additional geographic information e.g. lat/long coordinates to your address data for more targeted marketing or geographical analysis.

RDI™ – Residential Delivery Indicator lets you differentiate between residential and business addresses to lower shipping costs.

Email Address Validation – validate emails before they enter your database, and assign a 'quality score' to each email based on several criteria.

ZIP Code™ Lookup – identify prospects and customers within a certain ZIP Code using the very latest USPS data.

For more information on any of these products, visit **www.smartsoftdq.com**

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