



# PostcodeNEWS

THE JOURNAL OF AFD POSTCODE SOFTWARE SPRING Q.2/02 ISSUE 27

## AFD tops New Media award



**A**FD's BankFinder Internet scooped the coveted and closely fought New Media Award presented at the Marketing Expo on 12th March 2002 at the London ExCel Centre.

With the continued rise of automated banking like Direct Debit and Standing Orders it's a fact that many financial transactions are delayed, rejected or made impossible through simple data

### >> The Marketing Expo 2002.



"DM Business had judges for this years awards whose collective knowledge of the marketing industry is enormous. Together they knew how data accuracy is crucial to the progress and perception of direct marketing. BankFinder Internet stood out as it puts this into practice in a New Media environment. No more headaches." **Frank Wainwright, Editor DM Business speaking at the Marketing Expo 2002.**

errors. The impact on customer relationships, administration costs and lost or delayed revenue can be enormous.

True to form AFD developed a solution to help tackle the problems related to accurate, rapid capture of bank account and card details. Affordable to all and - just one year from launch - BankFinder is licensed to over 1,000 users.

Development didn't stop there. AFD Marketing Director Neville Hilton said "Feedback from users strongly indicated that almost every organisation would benefit from at least one BankFinder license. But we recognised that the Internet is making self-service administration a reality so we developed BankFinder into a stand-alone Internet solution and have also included its functions with our hosted service package Postcode Internet Online."

Calling Card Company (part of European telecom giant Tele2) use BankFinder extensively in a call centre which handles written and telephone applications for the new Post Office low cost Fixed Line Telephone Services. Senior Systems Analyst Rob Hughes: "The software

certainly deserves an award. We use BankFinder to validate credit and debit card numbers and for rapid entry and cross checking of bank details required for Direct Debits. BankFinder does exactly what it says on the box and does it very cleanly and clearly. It works like a dream."

Why not find out what BankFinder Internet can do for your business.

[www.afd.co.uk/banknet.htm](http://www.afd.co.uk/banknet.htm)

## Welcome

Inside this issue of Postcode News:

**AFD BACS Software picks up New Media award.**



**Good News for Browser based systems.**



**Important news for mailsort users.**



**Address Management - Exclusive Inside Story.**







# Address Management an expert view

**S**ix years with Consignia's (Royal Mail) Address Management Centre as Channel Sales Manager has given Graham Robertson a wealth of expertise and insight into UK Postal Addressing. Combined with a background in commercial hardware and software this expertise is now available through AFD to those seeking addressing solutions.

**Graham Robertson -  
Address Management  
Consultant.**



## **What are the main postal address related issues on the minds of UK organisations?**

"As Channel Manager I had a lot of direct contact with both the reseller channel and larger corporate users of Royal Mail PAF®, helping them to use address management solutions effectively. I observed that for a lot of organisations address management is not a high enough priority. Something has to bring home the fact that customer perception of an organisation is vital, customer response times do count, and building a solid database does affect future business growth and marketing activity... and address management software helps achieve these things."

## **How would someone reading this article overcome internal resistance to investing in address management software?**

"The best way to justify expenditure on address management software is to compare your organisation with a competitor in the same industry who is getting it right. It's not acceptable to be worse than the competition in a customer-facing situation. The real question is "How can my organisation get the edge?"

## **Were there organisations that didn't put in a solution?**

"Yes. In an age when focus on the customer relationship is the route to retention and acquisition this in-action is at best short-sighted and at worst shows a complete disregard for the relationship. We all know it costs more to find a new customer than it does to retain an existing one.... so every contact counts."

## **What do you see as the key issue?**

"The rule of primacy. This simply says that a customer will remember the first interaction they have with your organisation. This almost inevitably involves taking down an address. The fact they didn't have to spell it out, that you got it right first time, that it was quick and efficient - all help put you in a good light. Surely this is the impression any sound organisation wants to project. Address Management sets the standard for a future relationship."

## **Won't the self-service Internet age bring an end to all this?**

"I doubt it. Direct contact will always form a part of the customer relationship... and self-service makes it even more important to put in an efficient way of collecting accurate information. Whether collected through an old typewriter or over the Internet data still has to be checked. Just because no one complains doesn't mean there is no problem. The silent complaint is exactly that. For example this week I received several items of incorrectly addressed letters misspelled address, wrong postcode, no postcode, Robinson instead of Robertson along with duplicated mailings. Normally I don't say anything (silent complaint).. now I'm with AFD they can expect a call from me! Most people will never complain... but the relationship is damaged.. trust is pulled down."

## **What perceptions would you like to correct about accurate addressing?**

"The idea that somehow it's not important or not urgent. Address management is not just about "can Royal Mail deliver?". Many companies have a mistaken perception that people don't care how they are addressed on an envelope... but they do





care. There is even the perception that the Royal Mail will always deliver - well they can't. And even if they do - does a late, scribbled on envelope leave a good impression? No. It's easy to create a hidden grievance. Remember, there is no second chance to make a first impression."

**You seem to feel quite passionately about this!**

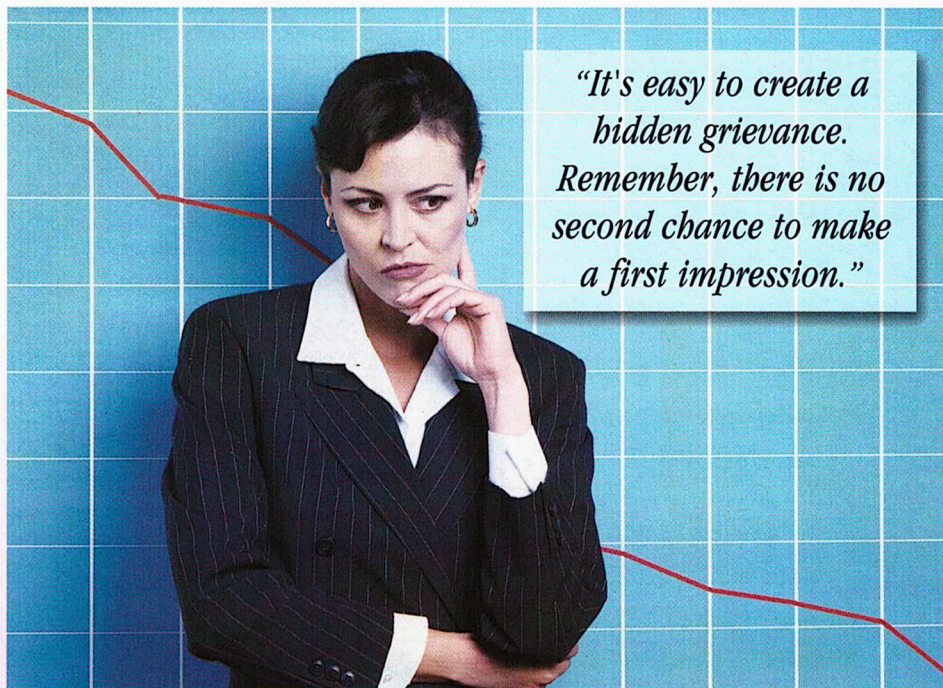
"Programs like "Watch Dog" teach us that people are looking for someone to blame. We need to remember that emotions play an enormous part in the sales process. So it makes no sense to create a negative emotion over something which is easily, affordably and quickly prevented at the outset of the customer relationship. Address Management software is as much a part of saying you care as any other service excellence issue."

**Surely the market for address management software is saturated?**

"No - enormous numbers of organisations have yet to buy an address management solution. I have spent 6 years extending the use of PAF and I know there is plenty of room for growth. Many organisations have been put off because the prices some software companies charge are OTT. As the second largest PAF reseller in the UK, AFD have proved you don't need a large staff and massive overhead to effectively support thousands of customers."

**Apart from price, what else should someone selecting Address Management software look out for?**

"Having been behind the scenes I think a combination of ease of use and integration, technical excellence, support and product functionality are the main



*"It's easy to create a hidden grievance. Remember, there is no second chance to make a first impression."*

things. Look for a company with market presence, a solid track record and an established customer base able to serve a wide range of users. But you need to get behind the cover... support (customer and technical), financial soundness, continued investment in development and a proven ability to respond to rapidly changing technology."

**Consignia (Royal Mail) have been in the news a lot recently. How do you see their future?**

"They obviously have big internal and external challenges on their hands. Most people and organisations are both consumers and users of mailing services. It has to raise its game in the eyes of its corporate customers.... as well as 56

million ordinary consumers. It also needs to shape-up for some aggressive competition."

"Corporates are upset by poor service and misdirected blame. Trusting a third party to deliver- then getting the blame when service fails is the worst of both worlds. You risk losing a customer to a competitor over an aspect of service which is largely beyond your control. I say "largely" because correctly addressing mail is something everyone can achieve with the right software."

For a look at our full range of Address Management products please visit:

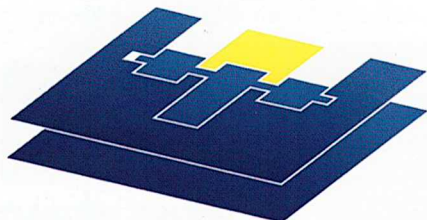
[www.afd.co.uk/products.htm](http://www.afd.co.uk/products.htm)





# The rise of browser based solutions

**A**n increasing number of organisations are considering a move to browser based solutions and others have made the move already. Many turn to AFD for Address Management components that have a successful four year track record in heavy usage browser based environments.



TDC Networking Consultancy Limited

Software Developer TDC Ltd recently completed a browser based Intranet system for the Northumbria Tourist Board with over 40 Tourist Information Centres and a telephone enquiry centre. TDC Managing Director Tim Dixon explain the important factors involved in selecting the right address management company.



"This was our first Intranet project involving integration of rapid addressing software with a back office system. It

had to handle brochure requests and accommodation bookings online, face to face or by phone. The crucial issues for us were ease of integration and data coverage to letterbox level rather than just to the Postcode. The crucial issues for the customer (apart from price) were the reputation, ongoing service and support of the third party supplier."

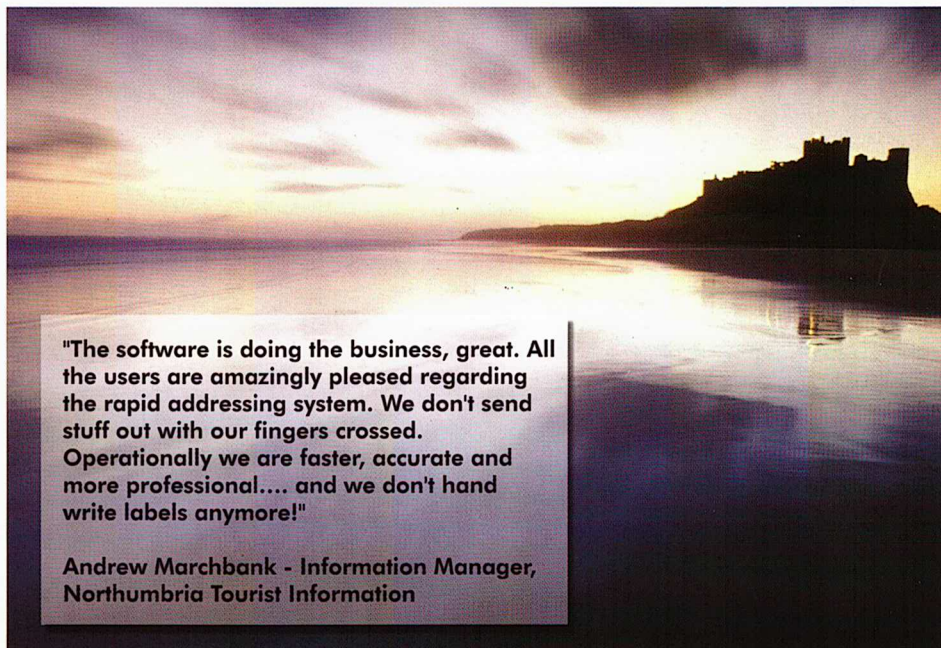
## How did you reach a decision?

"On the technical front we were able to download and evaluate the AFD solution before even speaking to them and we could see that Postcode Plus gave letterbox level information. When we finally got hold of other products we

compared by testing the recommended methods. Quite simply the AFD solution took less time to integrate and clearly dealt with important reliability issues associated with components for browser based applications.."

## How about the customer issues?

"You could argue that "safety first" won i.e. we just felt more confident about AFD, however there was also a commercial benefit. AFD gave a straight, reasonable price which they stuck to.... whereas we found ourselves in a rather pressured and onerous situation having to fight a price down from double the AFD quotation."



**"The software is doing the business, great. All the users are amazingly pleased regarding the rapid addressing system. We don't send stuff out with our fingers crossed. Operationally we are faster, accurate and more professional.... and we don't hand write labels anymore!"**

**Andrew Marchbank - Information Manager,  
Northumbria Tourist Information**

Bamburgh Castle, Northumbria





## Strict New Mailsort Data Checks

**Any organisation wishing to enjoy Royal Mail "workshare" discounts must check their mailsort software meets stringent new Royal Mail standards introduced on 1st March 2002.**

John Dolman, AFD Technical Director explained. "Royal Mail have been paying 'Workshare' postage discounts for some work not truly shared! They quite rightly wanted to close the loops which meant that mailsort software could pass their tests - but in practice not actually meet sortation requirements."



has passed the new tougher tests. What we are saying is for £35 per month here is a proven program which meets strict new criteria and makes light work of the data sortation, reporting, calculating and labelling involved in achieving Royal Mail 'Workshare' discounts. Why leave yourself in the lurch?"

AFD are offering a free fully functioning evaluation version of MailSaver for download from

[www.afd.co.uk/maillsaver.htm](http://www.afd.co.uk/maillsaver.htm)

### What is MailSaver?

MailSaver is an application which makes light work of the data sortation, reporting, calculating and labelling involved in achieving Royal Mail "Workshare" discounts. It has a step-by-step easy user interface. Instead of presenting the complexities of the process (and it is complicated!) to the users it simply invites users to attach the data file, select the parameters, run the program, view the calculations / discounts and print the labels and reports.

A major problem of the old standard was that poor data formatting resulted in mail going in the wrong bag. For example the county Buckinghamshire incorrectly placed in the town field could result in an item being misrouted to Buckingham rather than (correctly) to Chesham, which appeared in the field above. This kind of mistake increases work instead of sharing it.

"What's needed is more tolerance of poor field placement of data and that's what AFD MailSaver delivers."

"The fact is that Royal Mail can now enforce the new standard - and refuse discounts. Of course AFD MailSaver



## Internet World 11-13 June 2002 Earls Court London

With the Internet frenzy over... the raw commercial reality of the Internet remains. AFD will show its award-winning range of Internet solutions and senior staff will be on-hand to talk about the issues affecting your business.



### INTERNET WORLD

Earls Court, London 11-13 June 2002

### NEW NAMES

A stream of new organisations from almost every industry sector continues to select AFD address management products. AFD has recently welcomed hundreds of new customers including Caudwell Group, Envirowise, NSPCC, Northumbria Tourist Board, Sheffield Hallam University, Telewest Communications PLC and Thames-Link Rail.

Thank you all for choosing AFD.







## HOT SPOT

**Leo Peers**  
In-house Graphic Designer



Born in London, Leo has been into graphic design since the age of 11 and now handles most of AFD graphic design, in-house. Having travelled extensively and lived in India and the Middle East it's no surprise that Leo has a passion for Indian food "the hotter the better".

The consistent wind makes the Isle of Man a windsurfer's paradise (except for the reduced amount of sun!) this suits Leo who mixes surfing with Tai Chi, for fitness and balance. Not a fan of American Hollywood "cheese" movies Leo's all time favourite is the epic Apocalypse Now. You won't find Leo watching TV, he prefers reading non-fiction travel and design books and for web sites [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk) has enough content to keep him happy for hours.

*"AFD Software is committed to providing excellent, affordable addressing software to small and large users alike. AFD Postcode 2000 products offer a unique combination of more data, faster searching, greater functionality and lower cost."*

DAVID DORRICOTT, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Contact AFD

**By Phone** 01624 811711 (Sales)  
01624 811712 (HelpDesk)  
0800 083 8424 (Automatic FREEPHONE Registration)  
**By Fax** 01624 817695  
**By Email** [postcode@afd.co.uk](mailto:postcode@afd.co.uk)

Keep in touch with Postcode developments by visiting the AFD Web Site - where you can try out products, collect free software and obtain technical support.

**Web Site** [www.afd.co.uk](http://www.afd.co.uk)  
**By Post** AFD Software Ltd  
Old Post Office Lane  
West Quay  
RAMSEY  
IM8 1RF

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Other product and company names mentioned may be trademarks of their respective companies.

## Data News Q.2/02

AFD are shipping Q.2/02 data within just five days after receiving fresh PAF® data from Consignia (Royal Mail)

Prices per update CD (exc. VAT) are £30 for AFD Postcode, and £75 for Plotter, Plus, Provider or Names & Numbers (Alternatively, order and pay for your next two updates and receive the third one free. A single data update CD can be used to update all users on one Serial No, or all users within one organisation.

AFD's monthly Postcode Ownership Plan (POP) covers all costs (including updates) in a single monthly payment. See [www.afd.co.uk/pop.htm](http://www.afd.co.uk/pop.htm)

Royal Mail Postcode Address File (PAF) statistics and newly announced changes to postcodes can be found at [www.afd.co.uk/datanews.htm](http://www.afd.co.uk/datanews.htm)

Names & Numbers Q.3/02 is due for release in June 2002.