

**AFD Software  
Postcode**

# **NEWS 62**

Winter Q.1/11



## **Adventurous, Determined, Prepared.**

Perhaps with these three qualities we could all be Ice Climbers! But for now these qualities are probably focussed on the challenges we will all face during 2011 and making the most of every opportunity. That is certainly the case at AFD and for outdoor activity specialist Snow+Rock. Read on!

### **Also in Postcode News:**

Recent Royal Mail research shows that at least £125 million in sales is lost each year by companies who do not regularly update the data in address management solutions.

AFD Group appoints **Duncan McLeod** as its new General Manager.



# Winter Wonderland!

This winter's abundant snow and ice-cold weather has actually boosted business for a number of AFD customers. Outdoor activity specialist Snow+Rock is one of them. Mat Robinson is the senior manager for six London stores: "The cold weather has been fantastic. We've seen increased sales of ski and snowboard gear, hats, gloves, thermal base layers, snow boots and down jackets."

We caught up with Mat in the busy Covent Garden flagship store to find out what makes Snow+Rock so popular. "We stock specialist kit and back this with specialist staff and a tailored shopping experience. We physically help everyone - from a person who wants to walk in the Dales to someone looking to climb Everest. We provide sound guidance to the novice and expert value to the specialist."

Mat sees staff as key to the success: "We recruit people who are active themselves and exude passion and energy".

Mat continued: "There are some products you just can't buy online, you need to try them on, feel them, talk about their performance. Our staff test products – boards, jackets, skis – so they not only have technical and product knowledge but real experience."

Snow+Rock has a loyal customer base developed over 27 years and now serviced through 23 stores. Mat's goal is for customers to have the best shopping experience in their life. As he was explaining how customers regularly email, write and seek him out to thank him - our conversation was interrupted by a shopper who simply said "the guys in your mountain section are brilliant!"

Snow+Rock capture customer details at the till: "By taking customer details we can communicate with them, we want to let them know what we're doing, show how they can benefit and build and reward their loyalty". In a busy store this can present a dilemma.

**"People don't like waiting to pay for goods and we need to keep queues as short as possible. Yet it is at the till that we collect customer contact details.**

**Anything that can be done to shorten the queue is very important – that is why we use AFD Postcode to minimise the time we take to enter an address. We just ask for the postcode and house number."**

[www.snowandrock.com](http://www.snowandrock.com)



## How could AFD Postcode help boost your business?

Like Snow+Rock, thousands of organisations use AFD Postcode to improve efficiency, customer service and build a quality customer database. Does yours? The business benefits are clear.

### Confidence

People using AFD Postcode no longer type addresses! They simply enter a postcode into their application and an accurate street level address appears. You may wonder "Is this is important?". We have the testimony of many users about the improved productivity, the reduction in mail returns, the lower mailing costs and the confidence in professional-looking correspondence – but there is more.

### Consistency

At AFD our technicians review data from hundreds of different situations – and the message from the data is the same. Without the consistency and reliability of the Royal Mail PAF data within AFD Postcode, address data is riddled with inaccuracies. People make mistakes and typing errors, and their knowledge of the 28.8 million addresses in the UK is not complete!

### Ready to Go

Did you now that all AFD solutions are ready for rapid integration into existing systems? But if you don't have the time, expertise or resources – it doesn't matter! AFD Postcode will work as though it's integrated in virtually every Windows application. Simply set Robot, type the postcode directly into your word processor, spread sheet or database application – and the address will appear. There is nothing to click, press or program and no windows to swap or Hotkeys to press. All AFD Software solutions come with full, industry-leading technical support – free!

For full details please visit [www.afd.co.uk/postcode](http://www.afd.co.uk/postcode) or call 01624 811711 to discuss your needs in detail.





## What About Others?

The world is in considerable turmoil, there seems to be no shortage of suffering whether through war, natural disasters, poverty or lack of knowledge or through the global economic crisis.

Each year at AFD every team member is encouraged to nominate a charity which is actively engaged in assisting and empowering those affected by these issues. This year over 50 organisations received gifts. The diversity of their missions is huge, touching the UK, and many nations.

This year, AFD focused on the homeless with gifts to SOS Children's Villages who house 78,000 abandoned and orphaned children in over 100 countries; Hands of Hope who build homes for families who are currently housed in inadequate shacks in Romania, and Chapel Street who provide healthcare and other initiatives for the homeless in London and other localities in Britain.

Thank you to each of our customers – without you our business would not exist. Thank you to our staff team – without you operating efficiently we'd have nothing to give.

## ONS Changes Voting, Health and Politics Administration Codes



Most AFD products include a range of data fields that relate postcodes to government administrative geographies. Each carries both a description and a code. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) supplies this data and has introduced new codes for four of the geographies. These are Primary Care Trust (PCT), Local Authority (Authority), European Electoral Region (EER) and Political Ward (Ward).

### How will this affect you?



AFD now fully supports the new, standardised 9 character coding scheme which applies to these geographies. We have taken the opportunity to introduce a 9 character code for the Parliamentary Constituency which we previously supplied as a description with no code.

From Q.1/11 all AFD products include the new codes which are displayed in the front-end (or user interface).

Almost all applications where AFD is integrated will continue to work and utilise the old ONS codes. We recommend switching to the new ONS 9 character code by the end of 2011. This is because any new areas or regions introduced by ONS are not likely to be allocated an old style code.

Because the old codes are 3-6 characters in length, developers will need to make a few minor changes. Please do contact our support team for assistance in planning your migration to the new codes [support@afd.co.uk](mailto:support@afd.co.uk).

### Key Point

If you use PCT / Local Authority / EER or Ward information, plan to migrate to the new codes before the end of 2011. AFD will fully support your migration please contact [support@afd.co.uk](mailto:support@afd.co.uk)



# CENSATION UPGRADE

AFD Software has continued to refresh its Censation geodemographic classification system every year. We are now in a position to add further value to the system by including data from face to face interviews with more 250,000 people. This is a huge sample of the UK population and continues to place Censation at the forefront of classification systems. This update will be released in Q.2/10 in April this year.

## Research Backs Need for Fresh Address Data

With the current focus on keeping costs down it's important not to make false economies through cuts that adversely affect your revenue. Recent research from The Royal Mail Address Management Unit has shown how out of date PAF data could be losing you significant business.

10,000 occupants of newly built households were contacted over a period of a few months. Over 800 responses were received and these revealed some startling facts.

- 74% said they had experienced difficulties ordering goods and services, either online or over the telephone, as their new address and/or postcode were not recognised at the point of sale
- Worryingly, 40% said that the difficulties were on-going and a further 21% said they were still experiencing these problems 6 months after having moved into their newly built home.

There may only be a small number of newly built properties within your own target market, but small numbers can add up in their impact. 30% of the home owners who responded are estimated to be first time buyers.

Of course, they have a particularly high demand for goods and services as they need to fit out and prepare a new home.

The fact that they can move into a new property indicates their financial potential and confidence. It is these first time buyers that are having most difficulties with retailers, TV and telecoms companies, financial services (notably insurance companies) and with utilities providers.

Wouldn't these buyers simply shop elsewhere? The research shows this is not the case. Instead the homeowners end up spending less than intended. In fact the research conservatively estimates this at over £125m less being spent than expected.

You can help yourselves get ahead of the competition, by getting a share of this £125m of business. AFD release fresh data within its products within two weeks of receipt from Royal Mail. And with Electronic Distribution you can be the first to download and install the updates.

For more information please contact [postcode@afd.co.uk](mailto:postcode@afd.co.uk) and see Data News on the back page of this publication.





**Duncan McLeod**

## New General Manager

The AFD Group has appointed Duncan McLeod to the position of General Manager. Duncan has overall responsibility for finance, sales, technical, research & development and operations.

The appointment follows his recruitment in early 2010, to follow on from Judy Mills who retired after more than 11 years in the position.

Duncan's initial focus is on process improvement - looking at quality and procedures which allow the team to focus on technological developments in the market place.

Duncan says "I am delighted to join such a successful company at what is both an exciting and challenging phase in its development. Being at AFD is like joining a family rather than a company - everyone has been so friendly and encouraging. We have great ambitions as a company and I hope with my experience in project management and sales we can go on to greater things. It has felt that my entire career has been perfect training for this role."

Duncan has over twenty years' experience in the software industry specialising in customer support, sales support, project management and value added services.

You are welcome to direct any comments about AFD products and services to Duncan. We are always working to improve the experience of AFD customers. [duncan.mcleod@afd.co.uk](mailto:duncan.mcleod@afd.co.uk)

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This quarter, 112,098 new delivery points appear in PAF products (AFD Postcode, Postcode Plus, Refiner, Names & Numbers) along with 7,847 new postcodes and 17 new localities. There are also over 50,000 changes to existing addresses. These are all included in our latest Q.1/11 update.

ONS have introduced a new coding scheme for a number of geographies which is fully supported by the Q.1/11 release of our software. This affects Authority Codes, Ward Codes, European Electoral Region and Primary Care Trusts. For full details see separate article.

BankFinder for Q.1/11 contains all the latest sort codes and validation information for both bank accounts and card numbers. This includes updated validation information for Coutts bank accounts. With bank consolidations and re-organisation often taking place, only by having the latest release can you be sure of not rejecting a valid account number.

To order updates please call 01624 811711 or email [postcode@afd.co.uk](mailto:postcode@afd.co.uk)

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