



AFD Software
Postcode

NEWS 72

Summer Q.3/13



A Clear View?

Running your business with dirty address data is a bit like driving with a dirty windscreen.

It requires huge concentration, a lot of luck.... and it can be very dangerous!

DX is the largest independent mail, courier and logistics operator in the UK.

Servicing businesses, public sector and consumers, it delivers and collects around 1 million items each day, covering 99.7% of the UK.

In this summer edition of Postcode News we look at how DX got to grips with dirty address data to get a clearer view of their business – and how you could do the same.



The Professionals

DX specialises in the delivery of time-sensitive, high value and business-critical items and is trusted by the UK Government and foreign embassies for passports and visas. DX holds major contracts with Vision Express, Ladbrokes and almost all the top 100 law firms.

In 2009 with endorsement from the Law Society of England & Wales, AFD Software set up a service to enable law firms to clean up the delivery data required for effective delivery by DX.

This secure, automated data cleansing service has successfully processed millions of addresses for hundreds of law firms, enabling those firms to reduce risk and enjoy the highest delivery standards. In addition DX also use AFD Refiner® software to deal with the internal address data issues that all professional firms must handle.

A Challenge to Growth

“Address data is core to delivery and collection operations, to routing, planning, customer services and marketing. As a group growing both organically and by acquisition we inherited data from migration through different systems and some of that data stood alone outside of our main systems. We had to deal with this challenge.”

James Timberlake – DX Group Head of Marketing

www.thedx.co.uk



Address Data Understanding What's Wrong

Andrea Houston is DX Group CRM & Database Marketing Manager: "We wanted to get a view on the state of our customer master data and a view of duplicates on the system to help us understand customer hierarchy and inter-relationships. We knew we had an issue with duplicates and their presence had immense implications in understanding the business and of course for mailing selections.

We wanted to identify them, find patterns in them and deal with them. Once we could understand where the duplicates were and why they were there we could begin to change our internal business rules and processes to prevent them occurring, or at least understand when and why they exist. For example we could define best practice for setting up a customer record so that we can target mail appropriately to a head office, site or individual and enabling us to gain a single view of each customer.

www.afd.co.uk/refiner

We have a clear strategy for growing the business and part of this means that it is essential to **identify prospective customers** that are more likely to suit our business model. For example businesses on industrial estates that we already visit are ideal and enable us to grow while containing operational costs. Of course **containing operational costs** makes us more competitive. A positive cycle!

There was also evidence that we had an issue with the quality of our address data – and we needed to know the size of the problem. We could see **spelling mistakes**, simple formatting errors, **inconsistent formatting**, and the **misuse of address fields** for non-address information – all the things that come from human intervention and maintenance. Other issues included **address data** held in different parts of the business that was **out of date** and had become separated from the main address database. We needed to know if they were real live addresses and to which customer they were related – then we could map them into our routing systems and get them into our main Enterprise Resource Planning system."

"AFD Refiner 'cleanses, de-duplicates and appends'. That's exactly what we wanted."

“The Refiner demonstration proved it was a simple tool that does exactly what it says – and works with our data.”

Andrea continues: **“Although data came from a variety of systems in different formats, I could see how Refiner was changing and normalising the address data** – poor spelling corrected, capitalisation made consistent, data fields used correctly, missing data inserted and redundant data removed. Having carried out a number of data migrations we really understand the importance of this.

Identifying duplicate records with **Refiner has really helped get rid of noise, confusion and distraction** by enabling us to bring order and clarity to data.

With Refiner we could get more creative. Refiner comes with extra datasets that we can use to append to our data. For example we can use the urban / rural indicator to give us **new insights** or the AFD Just Built data to identify **new opportunities**. We can also geo-code data which enables instant visualisation and linking to other systems.

This information can **reveal patterns and trends** within the data which lead to actionable insights which **grow the business** or help reduce operational costs.

Using Refiner brings a new focus to address quality and delivers visible improvements and levels of clarity to the business. This impacts everything from delivery, to service to growth.

The mass correction by Refiner in one go saves a lot of time and we can review address data that has not been cleansed for years. It's automatic and we can put the cleansed data straight back into our system with confidence. AFD offer great support and I love the fact that if we ask for help they can use remote access tools to see what we are doing, and advise us on the best way to achieve it.

Bringing the dull to life!

James Timberlake – DX Group Head of Marketing continued: “Data can look like a dull subject but it can bring things to life. In fact, data is the life-blood of every commercial endeavour and is a key foundation for any modern business.

The retail market relies on accurate address data to deliver. Reliable address data is also foundational to good decision-making, on where we are today, and where we are heading. Without it decisions are slower, more difficult... and nerve-wracking!”

“Address data is fundamental to a courier business **for both delivery and growth**. It's a very real thing - real people in vans delivering things - and a very strategic thing - where are our services most used or underused, where are the gaps and how can we fill them to **improve service to our customers, resulting in greater profitability?**”

Want to see if Refiner could work for you? Call 01624 811711 or email postcode@afd.co.uk and get one of our address data experts to show you Refiner with your data – and judge for yourself.



Retaining Customers with Refiner

The Problem

Lost post loses customers, duplicates alienate them, poor spelling antagonises them. These problems are compounded when historically separated address databases need to be merged or new lists are bought. Sometimes new computer systems or uses require address data to be re-formatted completely or for extra data to be appended.

To solve these issues Refiner will enable you to clean, de-duplicate, re-format and append easily and quickly.

The Solution

AFD Refiner® is a proven "Quality First" high yield batch and interactive address list cleansing tool to transform address data. Refiner cleans, de-duplicates, re-formats and geo-codes address data. It solves the real address data problems which hamper profitable business and damage the marketing industry.

The Appeal

It's easy to trash good data with sloppy matching routines, so Refiner delivers results, fast - but never compromises on reliability and quality. The "Easy Access" design appeals to ordinary users looking for top automated match rates. Whatever format your data is in and whatever format you want your data to be in - Refiner offers data flexibility.

The Outcome

Refiner will help you improve customer service, protect your brand, raise quality perception of your organisation, reduce post bills, cut waste and deliver the goods.

Next Steps

Want to see if Refiner could work for you? Call **01624 811711** or email **postcode@afd.co.uk** and get one of our address data experts to show you Refiner with your data – and judge for yourself



Core Upgrade

As part of the Q.3/13 release there is a version upgrade to all installed AFD Products. This is a behind-the-scenes upgrade to the core of our products which lays a foundation for future enhancements. This upgrade requires no action on your part.

HOT SPOT

Sammy Miles

Finance Administrator

Sammy is about to celebrate ten years at AFD Software! During that time she has started a family, attended various training programs and made an impact in the local primary school and children's work.

Sammy specialises in book-keeping and works part time with AFD Software Finance team and is responsible for automated payment collections and liaises directly with customers.

Sammy has an 8 year old daughter called Ruby, a mad Springer Spaniel called Dougie, and loves working with kids. She especially enjoys trips with primary school children (she is a parent governor) and with Brownies (as a qualified Guide Leader). "It's fun and a welcome change from other responsibilities."

There is a good social aspect to the team at AFD and each year she joins the 'girls' on an overnight camping trip in a nearby Glen, which includes open fires. Sticks are whittled with knives ready to roast marshmallows - a memorable experience!

Sammy's musical taste is wide and stretches through Motown, Metal, Classical, Country, Blues... and beyond! Current favourite tunes are from Caro Emerald, Bruno Mars, Mumford & Sons and Daft Punk. We won't say how old Sammy is but suffice to say she recently went to see Robbie Williams.



AFD Data News Q.3/13

Over the past three months there have been significant updates to data on the Royal Mail Postcode Address File (PAF). These include 151 new localities, 7,150 new postcodes, 85,814 new delivery points and 40,374 delivery point changes. These are all included in our latest Q.3/13 update which is now released. The Q.3/13 Names & Numbers update is due for release shortly.

Are you receiving regular data updates?

We recommend a minimum of quarterly updates to all AFD products that contain address information. So, if you are using AFD Postcode, Postcode Plus or Names & Numbers it is worth checking that you receive and apply data updates on a regular basis. If you are uncertain that you are receiving updates please email postcode@afd.co.uk and we will check for you.

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