



City of Tempe Standardizes Disparate Data with Address Verification



The need to retain accurate data within any government agency is undeniable. Maintaining accurate address data is not only a method for agencies to verify identities and mitigate fraud, but the mailing system is also what millions of citizens rely on to receive the funds that their lives depend on, from tax returns to government aid. Most government interaction with citizens is initiated by sending mail.

Unreliable addresses can cost the government – and taxpayers – millions of dollars each year. It can not only open the government and its citizens to the risk of address fraud, but also result in lost opportunity for analytics, delays in important bills or aid as well as waste in time and resources.

The local government agency of Tempe, Arizona experienced such hinderances when their address data were not only formatted inconsistently across their multi-departmental applications but also were oftentimes inaccurate upon entry.

ADDRESSING DATA INCONSISTENCIES AMONG DEPARTMENTS

Tempe is Arizona's seventh largest city by population. With over 185,000 residents, the local government must rely on accurate contact data to communicate with its constituency. The city sends thousands of pieces of mail each week and must consistently produce mass mailings which range from utility billing to permitting and more, spanning multiple, separate departments.

The City of Tempe relied on mailing labels that were produced from the address information stored in the city's application database, which is not central in nature. The many systems in the city depended on contact information that commonly varied across departmental applications.

Keith Stepp, a business analyst at the City of Tempe, said that this is because most line-of-business (LOB) applications have proprietary data structures without a consistent format to store addresses. "The results are inconsistent addresses that cannot be related to each other across systems," Stepp said.

But the heart of the problem lies in the fact that some of the city's contact data still contained inaccurate or incomplete address information. Some addresses were improperly spelled, inconsistently abbreviated or even contained the wrong ZIP Code™ and made synchronization impossible.

On top of that, the city's mailings had to conform to USPS®CASS™ standards to ensure the highest rate of deliverability.

DECIDING TO DEPLOY A DATA WAREHOUSE

The City of Tempe realized the need to develop an extract, transform and load (ETL) process to standardize and consolidate data into a data warehouse.

"The primary purpose of the data warehouse will be to enforce address consistency and then establish logical relationships between disparate systems," Stepp said. "The goal is to provide a comprehensive information and analysis system that allows users to view information by address."

Melissa's Address Verification solution was integrated into the city's custom application to feed the data warehouse. It validates addresses to the highest level of accuracy, the physical delivery point, while standardizing data for faster processing and fluidity between departments. Tempe utilized Address Verification to verify addresses in batch and point-of-entry to streamline data warehousing. Its utilization saved the City of Tempe on postage and shipping by eliminating bad addresses and appended USPS CASS Certified™ postal codes.

Communication efforts became easier and undeliverable as addressed mail decreased saving the government agency on time and resources and making new analytical opportunities possible.

By having consistent addresses, the city now can develop relationships across applications that were not possible in the past. The city is now also moving forward with its plans to integrate Address Verification with its enterprise geographical information system (EGIS). Stepp projects that with this integration, it will be possible for the city to perform spatial analysis on business data.

“ The [Address Verification] solution has played a vital role in scrubbing address data as it comes in – creating consistent addresses for logical integrity within the data warehouse. ”

– KEITH STEPP, BUSINESS ANALYST
AT THE CITY OF TEMPE

About City of Tempe:

The City of Tempe, Arizona is the state's seventh largest city and is located in the center of the Valley of the Sun. Tempe is bordered by Phoenix, Scottsdale, Mesa and Chandler.

About Melissa:

Since 1985, Melissa has specialized in global intelligence solutions to help organizations unlock accurate data for a more compelling customer view. Our breadth of data and flexible API technology integrates with numerous third-party platforms, so it works for you and makes sense for your business. More than 10,000 clients worldwide in key industries like insurance, finance, healthcare, retail, education and government, rely on Melissa for full spectrum data quality and identity verification software, including data profiling, cleansing, matching and enhancement services, to gain critical insight and drive meaningful customer relationships.

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