melissa

Quest for Quality

Your Guide to Overcoming Data Obstacles for Business Success

- Profile
- Enrich
- Verify
- Match

Intro

Addy's Field Notes:

Did you know that your customer data could be unreliable? Like others in my organization, I was unaware that the quality of our data was the root cause of all kinds of issues such as undeliverable shipments, operational inefficiencies, and poor decision-making. Because of this, it's become my mission to let others know how important it is to have the right tools in place to monitor and maintain data quality over time. This guide will help you overcome 4 common data obstacles and "scale the data quality mountain" to eliminate inaccurate, outdated, and duplicate records. When you reach the top, you'll discover all the benefits clean data has to offer - including reduced costs and waste, greater ROI, and a 360° customer view.

Hi! I'm Addy. As an Address Expert, I've learned what it takes to overcome common data obstacles, and how businesses across all industries can benefit from better data. I hope you find my tips and tools valuable as you embark on your own data quality journey!

Recommended Tool: Data Profiling

Data Profiling is a great way to shine a light on your customer data - by collecting metadata on your existing records, you can identify areas where your data is bad and how it might be slipping into your systems. For example, here you can see that we were collecting invalid state abbreviations - XX, YY. With that knowledge, we were able to lock down our webforms and ensure that only valid state information would be accepted when the form was submitted.

Field Note 1:

Data Profiling helped us find and fix the bad data that was holding our business back

Obstacle #1: What you don't know can hurt your business

Roughly 60% of organizations don't measure the annual financial cost of poor-quality data. (source: Gartner)

One of the first problems I realized when I began my data quality journey was that I had no idea whether our customer data was good or bad - basically, our business was lost in the dark. As we collected customer data over time, typos, misspellings, and outdated information rendered it problematic. Not only were we missing out on valuable opportunities by not reaching as many customers as we could be, but we were receiving a lot of returned mail - a waste of time and money. I learned that data discovery is the first crucial step in the data quality journey.

VALUE	COUNT
MA	100
CA	76
XX	53
ME	25
TX	18
NJ	15
MO	7
YY	12

Obstacle #2: Beware - bad data is lurking

Another discovery I made on my quest for data quality was learning how important it is to prevent bad data from entering your systems. No matter how pristine your database is, unless you have the right tools in place to prevent it from sneaking in, bad data is likely to build up over time as you continue to collect customer information - eating away at your profits, eroding trust, and damaging your brand reputation. Had I known this sooner, our business would have been able to prevent the issues we were experiencing.

Recommended Tool: Data Verification

Tools like Address Verification and Address Autocomplete can help you keep bad data at bay and your records accurate and up to date. Melissa's Address Autocomplete tool, for example, was a great addition to our webforms to ensure only valid addresses were entered. Not to mention, it has been a time-saver and easy to use for both customers and customer service reps - cutting necessary keystrokes by 50% or more, which is really a boon for mobile checkout.
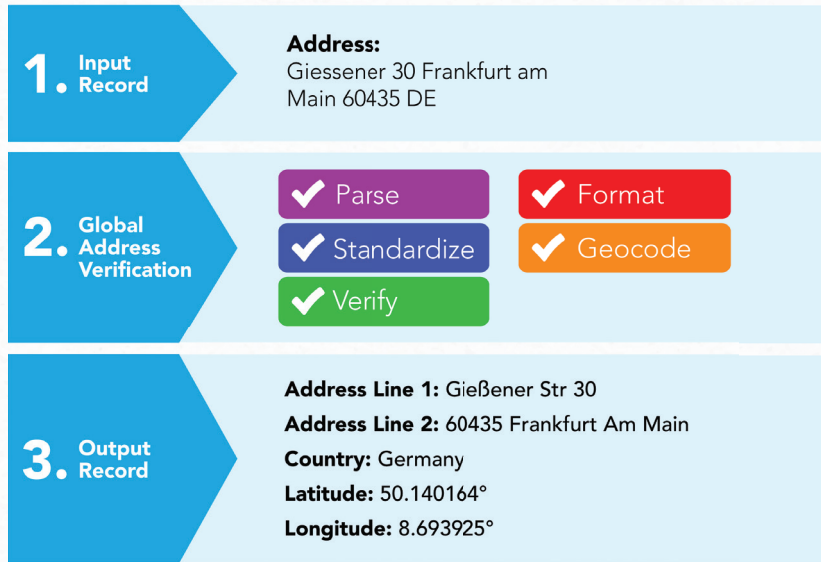
Melissa's Global Address Verification helps prevent bad data from entering your systems - it verifies addresses for over 240 countries and territories at the point of entry and in batch, formats addresses according to the rules and preferences for each country, handles unusual address requirements such as Sub Administrative Districts and alpha-numeric postal codes, and appends Latitude and Longitude coordinates. We liked the fact that Melissa is a single-source vendor, USPS® CASS Certified™ and offers proprietary capabilities such as RBDI (residential or business delivery indicator), AddressPlus® (adds known apartment numbers to residences), non-USPS data (5+ million addresses not supported by USPS®) and MAK® (Melissa Address Key) technology which tracks all changes to addresses over time.

1. Input Record

Address:
Giessener 30 Frankfurt am Main 60435 DE

2. Global Address Verification

- ✔ Parse
- ✔ Format
- ✔ Standardize
- ✔ Geocode
- ✔ Verify

3. Output Record

Address Line 1: Gießener Str 30
Address Line 2: 60435 Frankfurt Am Main
Country: Germany
Latitude: 50.140164°
Longitude: 8.693925°

Input

BUD@800mIAL.CON

Verify & Correct

Express

Domain/Cached Verification

TLD: com
Domain: melissa
TLD DESC: Operated by Verisign
Email: bud.walker@melissa.com
Status: V

Premium

Real-Time Verification

bud.walker@melissa.com ✅ Verified
TLD: com
Domain: melissa
TLD DESC: Operated by Verisign
Email: bud.walker@melissa.com
Status: V

Obstacle #3: Missing information hinders efforts & insight

Companies with strong omni-channel marketing strategies retain roughly 89% of their customers. (source: Salesforce)
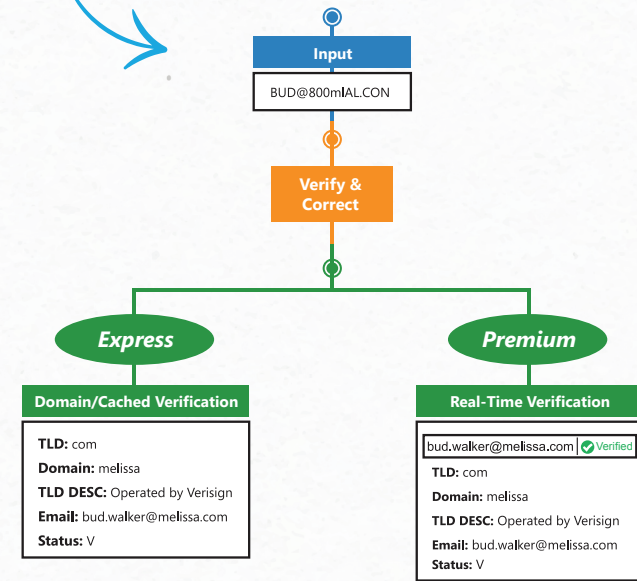
Melissa offers other tools for verifying and maintaining customer contact data, which has helped us maintain effective customer communication. For example, with Phone Verification, we can validate that the customer phone numbers in our database are live and callable, saving us time and resources. It also has the capability to determine line type (landline vs. mobile) and taps into carrier data to identify the business associated with the number at activation.

Melissa's Global Email Verification service has also been an essential tool for us - the service pings each email in real time to determine that it exists and can receive email. Removing the bad email addresses from our database helped us reduce bounce rates and the risk of blacklisting, thus improving deliverability and enabling us to maintain a positive sender reputation.

Our company has always been on the lookout for innovative ways to improve our target marketing efforts. During my data discovery journey, I quickly learned that we had gaps in our customer records - missing email addresses, phone numbers, and valuable information such as demographics and location intelligence. We needed a solution that would help us deliver personalized and relevant campaigns, optimize advertising spend, and reach the right audience at the right time.

Recommended Tool: Data Enrichment

Mining for gold using third-party reference data allows you to enrich your records with missing information such as verified street addresses, email addresses, key demographics, firmographics, location intelligence, property data, and more. Melissa's Geocoding service enabled us to identify clusters of potential customers in specific areas and create hyper-targeted campaigns tailored to their needs and preferences. By analyzing the geocoded data, I discovered that a significant portion of my target audience resides in urban areas. Armed with this knowledge, I was able to optimize my advertising budget by focusing on targeted mailings for those specific locations to maximize my reach and impact.

In addition, by overlaying geocoded data with demographic information and property data, I gained valuable insights into the socio-economic backgrounds, interests, and behaviors of my target audience in specific geographic areas. This information allowed us to create more personalized content that resonated with the local population, resulting in improved brand perception and customer loyalty.

Field Note 5:

We use ZIP+4 Geocoding to create store locators for our mobile apps and link to U.S. Census Bureau demographic data - which helps us improve our target marketing efforts.
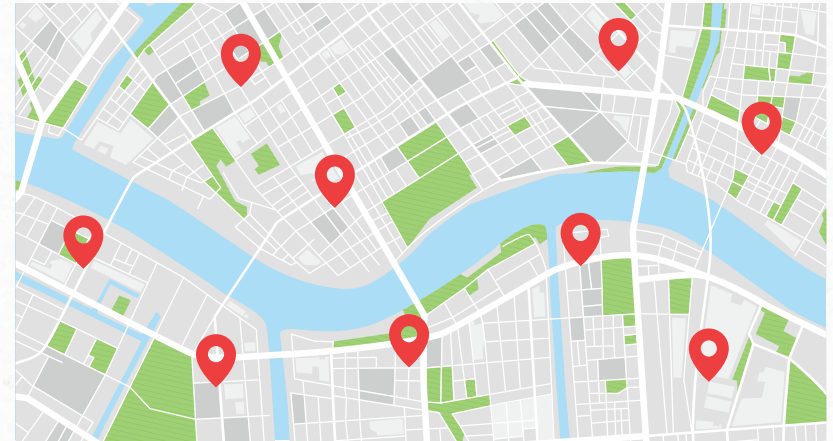
Field Note 6:

With Melissa's custom Property Data Solutions, we can add fresh, accurate real estate & property data elements to our in-house records!

Owner Name: John Doe
Phone: 555-555-5555
Tax Code Area: 554201
Lat/Long: 33.8753° N, 117.5664° W
Mortgage: $350,000
Square Ft: 980 Square feet
Year Built: 2001
Pool: Yes

View More>>

Obstacle #4: Duplicate data prevents a 360° customer view

When managing customer data, dealing with duplicate records is a headache. It can enter your systems in many ways - via online customer forms, manual data entry, and importing from outside sources - just to name a few. I knew duplicate data was preventing us from gaining a single, accurate view of our customers, and needed something to conquer it head on. In addition, we were wasting postage and printing from sending multiple mail pieces to the same customer - which made us look careless, possibly harming our brand reputation.

Recommended Tool: Data Matching

According to experts, duplication rates between 10%–30% are common for companies without data quality initiatives in place. (source: HubSpot)

By leveraging a matching and deduping solution, businesses can cut down on clutter, increase the accuracy of their database, and reduce postage and printing costs. We used Melissa's MatchUp® solution, which offers unique attributes like Survivorship for Golden Record Creation, Proximity Matching, and Householding

(which identifies multiple records at the same residence or organization) that can be deployed to help identify duplicates. MatchUp has the capability to understand and parse the various components of domestic and international addresses, and by combining deep domain knowledge of international address formats and advanced fuzzy matching techniques, we were able to identify and merge/purge even the most difficult-to-spot duplicate records.

Field Note 7:

MatchUp's unique Data Quality Score criterion helps determine the best record based on the most accurate address, name, phone and/or email.

Golden Record Selection

Check the algorithm(s) below that should be used to select the Gold Record.

You can use the arrow buttons to change the order in which the algorithms should be evaluated.

Click the button to the right of 'options' to set the specific options for that algorithm.

	Algorithm	Options
1	☑ Data Quality Score	DQS_RESULTS: Data
2	☑ Most Complete	NAME. ADDRESS
3	☐ Last Updated	Latest
4	☐ Custom Expression	Lowest

Congratulations, you made it to the top! Achieving the Golden Record for a 360° customer view is key to an effective data quality regimen, and Melissa can help you get there. From online solutions to APIs and cloud services, flexible deployment options with enterprise subscriptions and pay-as-you go plans are available. To identify the right tools for your specific business obstacle, schedule a quick discovery call with a Melissa Address Expert, and be sure to check out the Address Experts articles for more information.

Let's go!

Addy

About Melissa

Since 1985, Melissa has specialized in global intelligence solutions to help organizations unlock accurate data for a more compelling customer view. 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.

Get in touch with an Address Expert to explore free trials and POCs today!

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