HOPEWISER

A GUIDE TO DATA CLEANSING SOURCES

Which files should you be using?

With data now being valued higher than oil (*The Economist, May 2017*), ensuring that your most valuable commodity is in optimum condition is essential.

To make the most of your data, you must first be confident it is clean. There are numerous ways of achieving this and many different third party data sources can be used for cleaning and verification. Some of these sources claim to do the same thing, but you need to understand exactly what they are, where they come from and which to use. Only then can you be confident your data cleansing process is as efficient as possible.

In this guide, we look at the main data sources that are available, where they come from, what they do and why you should be using them.

The data sources you choose will depend on what you want to achieve. This document should help you decide, but if you need further guidance, just call Hopewiser on **0161 924 2800** and we will be happy to provide further advice.

Currently containing more than 30 million postal addresses and nearly 1.8 million postcodes, the Royal Mail Postcode Address File (PAF) is the definitive source for personal and business postal addresses in the UK.

It contains every delivery point in the UK and is being constantly updated. In 2019, an average of 22,468 additional delivery points were added to the PAF every month.

Much of this is fuelled by the growth of our towns and cities. As the number of addresses increases, so does the likelihood of very similar addresses which can cause confusion and anomalies within your existing data.

It's not just new addresses that are added to the PAF. Postal workers submit changes all the time. In fact a total of more than 4,000 changes to the PAF are made every day.

With so many changes being made, it is easy to see how your data could quickly become out of date. Obviously, it is essential your data is checked regularly against the PAF.

Checking your address data against the PAF means you can provide a more efficient and professional service to customers, while saving time and money. It allows you to convert more online sales, reduce the risk of fraud, optimise campaign planning and allocate resources effectively.

It means more of your mail can be delivered correctly first time, reducing wasted delivery charges and the costs associated with processing returns.

GAS Goneaway Suppression

At the start of 2018 it was reported by The Independent that the number of UK home movers was at a ten year high. In total, the number of people moving home at any one time is 370,300 according to data from Lloyds Bank.

It is also estimated more than ten per cent of the population move home every year in the UK and that people move a total of eight times in a lifetime. Between the ages of 18 and 30, people are likely to move the most, up to four times.

So there is a high probability that if you have a large database of consumers, some of them are no longer living where you think they are living.

The Goneaway Suppression (GAS) file is a highly accurate way to find if any of your customers have moved and identifying forwarding addresses.

It is sourced from various data sets originating from both public and private organisations that have received notification when someone moves in or out of a property. These could be local authorities, utility companies or commercial organisations.

(GAS) was established in 1992 to reduce the instances of mailing people who had moved house and is now used for cleaning the data for more than half of all direct mail in the UK.

RMG Re-mover

With so many of the adult population moving every year, it's worth consulting more than one data source. RMG (Re-Mover Goneaways) is another source that helps organisations respond to the challenge of keeping track of customers who may not have informed you of their move.

RMG is a goneaway data suppression file which contains details for more than 90 per cent of home movers in the UK.

It is built using exclusive sources and includes both home owners and renters. 65 per cent of movers are supplied 'in the month of move' which means that you can identify them quickly and take steps to minimise disruption to your marketing efforts.

Compiled from multiple sources (but never including 'assumed' data or postal returns), RMG uses data from UK property listings, changes of address notified to the financial services, retail and utility sectors, electoral roll changes, Land Registry data and social housing movers.

It contains 69 million records and includes data up to ten years old. 65 per cent of all records are unique to RMG at the time the file is released and the file is completely refreshed every month.
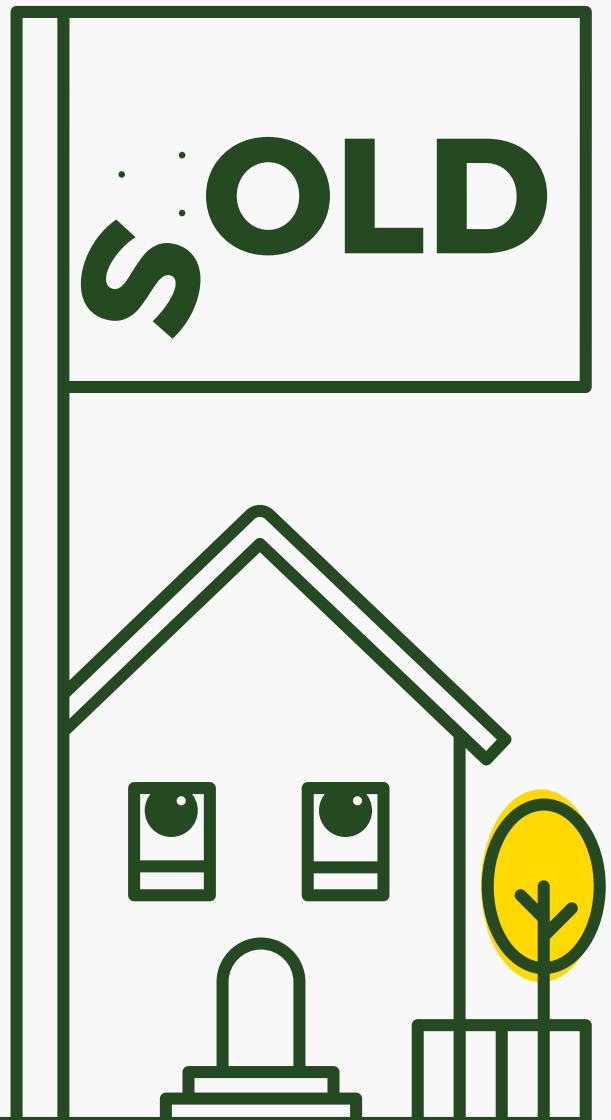
DBS Purifi Suppression

Launched in 2015 the DBS Purifi suppression file contains twelve million goneaway records and was independently reported to contain more than one million goneaway records that do not appear on any other suppression file.

By combining 70 million records from the DBS business-to-consumer datapool with residential property sale data, Purifi is fully up-to-date with current occupant data.

Compiled over many years, the Purifi database detects known home mover trigger data to identify the exact point when households are vacated. Every move notification is matched to a known consumer universe to find the vacating occupant of the property and this information is then added to the Purifi file.

Purifi includes 31 million household records.

70,000,000

MTS Mortascreen

There is one audience that will never respond to your communications, no matter how many times you target them and no matter how compelling your message.

607,172 people died in the UK in 2018. And the annual number of registered deaths is on the increase.

It is essential that you identify deceased records on your database and that is the purpose of Mortascreen (MTS)

Mortascreen is a trusted solution for deceased data management. It enables businesses to effectively identify deceased records at the earliest opportunity using only fully verified notifications of death.

All the data is verified and sourced from reputable, reliable organisations which include funeral directors, financial institutions and consumer registration services.

Mortascreen does not include any unverified deaths such as mailing returns, assumed deaths due to lack of financial activity, or unverified third party deaths.

It contains more than 10 million deceased records sourced over two decades. Approximately 10,000 new notifications are added each week and data is processed on a daily basis.

If you think only disreputable companies fail to clean their data, think again. We don't want you to be like Sussex Police who sent a letter to a man who had been caught speeding two years earlier. It was part of a campaign urging people not to speed in the New Year. However, because their data hadn't been cleaned, they did not realise that the man had died in the intervening years.

Errors like these are easily avoided by ensuring your data is checked against a trusted deceased suppression file.

NDR National Deceased Register

Alongside Mortascreen is the National Deceased Register. Similar to Mortascreen, the NDR is recognised as an accurate and reliable deceased suppression file and is used by many of the country's leading data bureau and data processors.

It is estimated that 30% of the NDR's deceased records are unique and it contains over 80% of all UK deaths. It is created from a range of exclusive data sources and approximately 40,000 new deceased records are added to the file every month.

The NDR's multi-source validation process is accurate, reliable and ICO approved. It does not accept 'assumed' data and the file has been examined by the ICO and is therefore fully compliant with all UK regulatory requirements.

The NDR includes data which is derived from anti-fraud activities undertaken by leading financial organisations. The process is rigorous and robust – records are only added to the file after multisource corroboration and no volunteered data is permitted. It is widely regarded as one of the most accurate deceased suppression files in the market.

TBR The Bereavement Register

TBR is another highly accurate way to remove the records of anyone who has passed away.

Since its inception in 2000, The Bereavement Register (TBR) has built a reputation for providing a high quality, reliable file of confirmed deceased records. The data is collected directly from the bereaved and third party sources of actual deaths. No assumed data is included. TBR captures an average of 85% of verified UK deaths and currently includes nearly ten million records, with 30,000 to 40,000 new records added each month.

MPS Mailing Preference Service

The Mailing Preference Service (MPS) was established in 1983 and is a free service for consumers which allows them to register their wish not to receive unsolicited direct mail. It is a service that is supported by the Royal Mail and ICO.

The use of the Consumer File by list-owners and users is a requirement of the British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing. It is also a mandatory condition under the Direct Marketing Association's Code of Practice.

If an organisation sends mail to someone on the MPS list and the recipient complains, then the MPS will investigate the matter. If it appears that the complaint is valid, then the matter will be passed to the Advertising Standards Authority.

While it is not illegal to send mail to someone who has registered with the MPS, the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 says an organisation should not repeatedly contact someone if they have asked not to be contacted.

Obviously, responsible brands who value their reputation, also respect their prospective customers' wishes. In addition, sending unsolicited marketing material to consumers who have expressed a clear preference not to receive such material is a waste of valuable marketing budget. We would advise that every postal mailing database aimed at prospective customers is checked against the MPS on a regular basis.

TPS Telephone Preference Service And Corporate Telephone Preference Service

The Telephone Preference Service (TPS) is a free service for consumers established in 1989. It is the official opt-out register on which consumers can record their wish not to receive unsolicited marketing calls.

It is a legal requirement that all organisations do not make marketing calls to numbers registered on the TPS, unless they have express consent to do so.

Even for postal mailing campaigns, it can sometimes be important to check against the TPS. An integral part of some mailing campaigns is a follow-up phone call.

Clearly, if you are not legally allowed to make the follow-up call, it may not be worth sending the mailing in the first place and you could save yourself valuable time and money.

In June 2004, the Corporate Telephone Preference Service (CTPS) was launched which gives businesses and organisations the opportunity to opt-out of receiving unsolicited sales and marketing calls.

MR Multiple Residence Data

With the Multiple Residence dataset from the Royal Mail, you can now improve the accuracy of your address data with access to over 800,000 additional premises.

Houses and buildings of multiple occupancy that share a single letterbox become problematic for postal and courier services. Knowing that Mr Smith lives at Flat 1-5 is not accurate enough for many deliveries.

Matching the name to a specific address within a multiple residence ensures that signed for and special delivery items reach their intended destination. That could be high value parcels or important documents.

55% of marketing professionals say better use of data for audience targeting is a priority. Multiple Residence provides access to additional sub-premise information including self-contained flats, sub-divided houses, apartment blocks, halls of residence, and nursing homes.

Having analysed the dataset, Hopewiser has concluded that Multiple Residence cannot simply be added to PAF as this will cause conflicting information that would prevent certain addresses from being validated.

Therefore, they have blended the two together and removed clashing address data.

WHY USE HOPEWISER FOR DATA CLEANSING?

All of the major data sources included in this guide are used by Hopewiser. In addition, they use other data sources from time to time, depending on the requirements of the project.

Hopewiser's data cleansing process starts by attempting to match the address. In parts of the UK, similar surnames are common, therefore it is important to have confidence in the address, before attempting to match the person information. However, even when a full address match is not possible, there are ways to check the person information. This is especially relevant within blocks of flats and other multiple residence addresses.

The use of suppression files is usually paid for on a 'per hit' basis. This means suppression list companies make more money by finding as many goneaway and deceased records as they can. However, there needs to be a balance between matching anything and everything, and ensuring that the matches are accurate. Hopewiser has spent more than 35 years in the data cleansing market and has created routines which make clear and obvious matches, but also allow some leeway for misspellings, whilst not making matches that are 'fuzzy'.

Alongside this, Hopewiser uses the suppression files in a defined order, using multiple sources, to give the best chance possible of cleaning the data.

The deceased files are checked first, because people can move towards the end of their life, but if they have died, then there is no point trying to find out where they have moved to. Goneaways are verified next, along with potential forwarding address information and finally, any mailing preferences are checked. The files are checked in a standard order to minimise the cost to the client, but this can be amended, if certain data has more relevance.

For Hopewiser the quality of the match is always more important than maximising the number of matches.

Hopewiser's aim is to give you a perfect view of your data and offer a range of cloud based, stand-alone software, integrations and bureau services. They can provide the ideal combination of products and service to help you make the most of your data.

Call Hopewiser today on 0161 924 2800