Driving Address Management Efficiency Using a Corporate Gazetteer

Whatever your business, using poor quality, inaccurate address data is going to impact on more than just your reputation. In fact, the lack of an effective address management system is likely to cost your organisation thousands of pounds in wasted staff hours, both in the office and out in the field, ineffective billing and for the emergency services, it could even risk lives.

In large organisations, there are likely to be multiple departments and systems creating and managing records for the same address. For example, in a Local Authority the same address could be used by a council tax system, voting register or revenues and benefits department. With a range of people entering or updating address data at different times on isolated systems that are not linked, the incidence of error is inevitable.

According to GeoPlace, there are more than 2.5 million address changes in Great Britain every six weeks, so unless organisations manage this effectively, they run the risk of substantial financial loss.

Corporate Gazetteer

Address Management experts Aligned Assets work with more than 150 large public and private sector organisations helping them reduce waste and increase efficiency by providing the most up-to-date address data through a corporate gazetteer. The key principle behind this tool is that it provides one version of truthful addresses that can be communicated across a whole organisation via any operational system. This not only eliminates the duplication of creating and managing address data, it removes the risk of error as a result.

At the heart of the corporate gazetteer is a repository of British Standard BS7666 addresses engineered to supply operational staff and systems, ensuring consistency, accuracy and concurrency. This British Standard defines how land, property, streets and their associated addresses should be recorded. This includes the use of a Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN), Unique Street Reference Number (USRN) and grid coordinates. By adopting this standard, any conflict of address data is minimised. It also means that due to the grid co-ordinates, all address data is mappable.

In addition to the gazetteer being kept up-to-date with address changes across Great Britain, organisations can add operational locations and assets that are relevant to their business, but are not captured by the national dataset. For example, there may be sub-units within a building, like a house converted into flats, each of which is likely to have a separate address; or there may be a separate building within a site, which is of interest to an organisation but has no postal address.

Real-time Requests

This consistent and up-to-date register of addresses, enhanced by your own local information, can then be accessed by individuals or systems that use addresses. This real-time access returns the most up-to-date address data from the corporate gazetteer.

Managing Changes on Silo Systems

In cases where organisations are not working from a centralised system, and each department is working with their own defined systems, a corporate gazetteer will push out any updates to all the different systems on an automated schedule that best suits the business (daily, weekly, monthly etc). These updates can also be filtered based on data content ensuring only the relevant information is being pushed out. For example, one system may require updates for all addresses, and another may only need residential addresses.

The result is that whichever system is using the data, it will always get the most up-to-date address, and then have any address already stored kept up-to-date with changes that happen at a national level. This model is a proven and tested one and exists in multiple public and private sector organisations.

A corporate gazetteer provides the building blocks for increasing efficiency both in terms of reducing costs, maximising income and safeguarding staff and the public.

A few years ago, West Yorkshire Police found themselves at an address management crossroads when new divisional boundaries were

introduced, and Ordnance Survey's legacy address products were being withdrawn. Their requirement was to be able to access and share the most up-to-date address data for the UK, that would not only integrate seamlessly with their Incident Records Management System and their Command and Control System, but would also allow them to upload and share local intelligence data. West Yorkshire Police have been able to achieve this by utilising an Aligned Assets corporate gazetteer tailored for their needs.

Ben O'Hara, Information Specialist for West Yorkshire Police, said "As criminals and victims are not constrained by political and policing boundaries, the availability of a national address gazetteer has meant West Yorkshire Police know the addresses we're verifying across the nation are the very most up-to-date. While this has a very clear impact on improved response times, it has also been responsible for vast efficiency savings through eradicating the manual updating of address records and the elimination of errors as a result."

Attaching Location Intelligence

A further dimension to the corporate gazetteer that is proving to be of enormous benefit to emergency services and Local Authorities alike, is the ability to attach local intelligence information that correlates to a specific address and sharing this across the organisation. This local intelligence could cover anything from access points for repairs to risk information. Once again, time saving and consistency of information are the key benefits of attaching your local intelligence to the address management system.

If your organisation is using address information, by enabling consistent access to the most up-to-date address data available through a corporate gazetteer, you will be driving efficiency, maximising the potential for revenue remittance, and in the case of the emergency services, better safeguarding staff and the public.

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