

Address Association Leadership Group Begins Work

April 8, 2010, South Salem, NY.

On Wednesday, April 7, the Steering Committee of the new Address Association began its work. Using the on-line conferencing facility donated by FEDMA, the seven volunteers, experts all, led by the group's organizer, Charles Prescott, discussed at length the mission, priority of projects, and the name of this new association.

Providing insight and thoughts were John Callan (Ursa Major Associates), Merry Law (WorldVu) and Jerry Messer (Data Services Inc.) from the US, Joerg Schneider (Deutsche Post Dialog Marketing) from Germany, Emma Gooderham (Allies Computing) from the UK, and Graham Rhind (GRC Database Information) and Alexander Singewald (Singewald Consultants) from the Netherlands. Unable to participate because of other demands, but certain to be active in the future, were Alastair Tempest (FEDMA), Dieter Weng (DDV) Germany, and Sheila Donovan (Global DM Solutions) and Richard Miller (Market Response International) from the US.

The majority of the discussion focused on the mission statement of the organization. This sets out broad policy goals of advocacy and education for the group - based on the underlying premise that an address is a basic human right. Much of the world's population, perhaps 60% of it, does not have an address, and in many countries this means that for many social and political purposes, you do not exist.

Once polished by the Steering Committee, the mission statement will be made public and circulated.

Projects identified as having priority include widening the availability of reasonably-priced change of address systems, targeting especially the Dutch Post. Why is the fee they charge for using the change of address file so high that customers are discouraged from using it? This is obviously to the detriment of the environment and mailers and the Post itself. Every undeliverable letter reduces the return on investment in the marketing exercise, creating another reason to switch to other media for promotion.

Another first priority will be to promote the adoption by the UPU of a resolution calling for all countries to have address systems and change of address systems that are available to be used by reputable businesses world-wide. Target date for this will be the 2012 Congress of the UPU in Qatar.

And it's not only about postal addresses, or direct mailers. This group is about addresses of all types - mobile numbers, GPS data, e-mail addresses, NAC, latlong....anything used in a data field in a file to represent location of an individual or business, for any purpose. Accuracy and currency are critical.

As for the name, it has not been finally decided, but the early voting shows a developing consensus around the title International Address Data Association, a name with a nice "euphonious sound as an acronym", IADA. (Thanks to Richard Miller for this observation.) Debate raged, however, over whether it should be "Global Address Data Association" or "International Address Data Association".

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