

DATABASE

TRENDS AND APPLICATIONS

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Melissa Data Helps Connectify Build Strong Leads

Clean data is critical to Web marketer's success.

San Francisco-based direct marketing firm Connectify Networks works with large consumer companies to generate sales leads across a network of Web sites. The process works like this. At a point in which users interact with a Web site in the network--a new user registration page, for example--they are able to opt into a special offer from a Connectify client--say, a free two-week subscription to the Wall Street Journal. "We bring compelling offers into environments where viewers are already transacting," says Scott Perkins, Connectify's vice president of operations.

The result is a win-win-win situation. Using a 100 percent opt-in procedure and best practices in email marketing, Connectify clients can build relationships with highly targeted prospective customers. The Web sites in the network have the ability to generate a revenue stream based on those points at which their users are interacting. And the users benefit from opting in to receive products and services in which they are interested.

Need for Clean Data

Accurate, clean data is an essential ingredient for Connectify's formula to work. "The hygiene of our data is a large part of the value we offer to our clients and our Web site partners," said Perkins. "If the addresses are not valid, The Wall Street Journal should not be expected to deliver a trial subscription." Clients also need to know how much interest is generated by their offers and from where that interest comes.

The critical need to generate accurate data is met by technology from Melissa Data. Melissa Data helps companies manage and optimize their contact data with solutions for address and phone validation, postal presort-

ing, data enhancements and sales leads. It offers more than 50 products and services to fit any budget or need.

Connectify uses Melissa Data's Data Quality Web Service to validate the millions of addresses and phone numbers collected from Web forms. As users opt in for a specific order, that data is cleansed before it is entered into Connectify's Oracle database. Network partners can either send the data in real time or collect the data and send it nightly for batch processing. "We talk to the Melissa Data server as a part of a subroutine before the data is entered into our database," Perkins said.

Data accuracy exceeds 99 percent.

Connectify also uses Melissa Data solutions to verify telephone numbers and ZIP Codes™. "It is becoming a large part of the data set we provide our clients and network partners," Perkins said.

The results are impressive. As could be expected, as much as 20 percent of the raw data entered through opt-in incentive programs is not accurate. But the data supplied to Connectify clients after it has been processed by Melissa Data has an error rate of less than one percent.

Why Melissa Data

Connectify has used Melissa Data solutions since Connectify was established nearly five years ago. "We have had a great relationship with them from the beginning," Perkins said. "They have a flexible way of doing business." Best of all, the technology works as expected, transparently and trouble free.

In addition to generating high quality data, the selection of Melissa Data has contributed to Connectify's ongoing success in two key ways. "One thing that has made this so suc-

cessful is we tried to keep it simple. We designed our system around our workflow rather than designing the workflow around the system," Perkins said. Melissa Data solutions were easily incorporated into the workflow.

Secondly, Connectify plans to expand its business through the efficient use of technology. Melissa Data will play a key role in that effort.

Next Steps

As Connectify expands, it has found itself working with smaller network partners, who do not want to invest resources into managing the advertising delivery aspects of their Web sites. Consequently, Connectify intends to offer partners a complete solution named ConnectDirect through which it will manage all the registration processes. It will dynamically insert offers into specific Web sites on a rotating basis based on past performance. Live verification of registration data will be an important piece of this effort.

"The industry has grown up in a batch orientation," Perkins said. "With the Internet, you can stream the data for live verification." In the future, Perkins added, Connectify intends to offer verification at the point of registration rather than after the fact. He will look to Melissa Data to help make that possible.

In the final analysis, Connectify's business model demands that high-quality data is delivered to their clients and network partners in a timely fashion. Melissa Data has emerged as their trusted partner in that critical process.

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