

Committee: Workgroup 164 – Informed Visibility Data Provisioning Improvements

Interim Recommendation

Final Recommendation

Purpose of the Workgroup

The mailing industry has become more reliant upon timely availability of Informed Visibility data. When combined with Intelligent Mail barcode tracing data, it provides a more effective way to manage mailing campaigns which in turn, improves the overall value of mail. Unfortunately, the current distribution path for Informed Visibility data has inherent delays of 24 to 96 hours, thus rendering the information not (or at least less) "actionable".

Participation and Discussion Format

Industry Leadership: Mark Rheaume
USPS Leadership: Stephen M. Dearing
Himesh Patel

The workgroup commenced with a weekly meeting schedule. Due to the broad nature of the charter – applicability to piece level, bundle, handling unit and container level data – at its commencement, the group agreed to prioritize activities and it was decided that the focus should be on container data. The workgroup was comprised of 15+ members from the mailing industry and the US Postal Service. The industry was represented by mail owners, mail service providers, publishers, printers, software providers, and consultants. The workgroup initially reviewed existing data distribution mechanism for container data and then evaluated multiple options. As part of the deliberations, the group took schedule and cost of developing a solution under consideration. A key driver to the resolution of the work was the approval of the Informed Visibility program by USPS management. This program will be undertaking the development of a solution to provide comprehensive visibility in a real-time manner. The group concluded with acknowledging this and focusing on a solution to mitigate the issue in the interim period.

Recommendations

The workgroup recommended that a more robust solution be developed as part of the Informed Visibility program. Acknowledging that the program has a developmental lead time, the USPS presented a transitional solution with an interim solution. The attached report details the approach adopted by the group, the key discussion elements and recommendations of the group.

Conclusion

The workgroup concluded with the following recommendations:

- Explore the interim IV (pre-deployment) solution as it becomes available for testing and evaluation. Mailers interested in participating in the interim solution should contact Steve Dearing, Himesh Patel, or Martha Forrest for more information.
- USPS will continue to pursue Informed Visibility (IV) as the long-term solution. IV is anticipated to provide mail owners and preparers with unparalleled access to mail visibility data.
- This workgroup will be sunset; however, IV and other mail visibility topics including data provisioning and latency issues will continue to be discussed in MTAC User Group 4 (UG4).