

Minutes for Workgroup #174 – Informed Delivery APP

Session 13: 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. WebEx

Carrie reviewed the meeting agenda: wrap up discussion on the ‘Suppression of Images’, including reviewing and discussing the survey to finalize the WG recommendation on Opt-In/Opt-out approach to the program; an update on user acquisition efforts; a discussion on the Open issues: Do Not Mail; and the next issue on the list, recommendations for the Postal Inspection service covers program.

Since the suppression of images is a hot topic, Carrie created a simple survey using survey monkey. It’s anonymous. We’re looking to get feedback on the workgroup member’s preferences for the program strategy at the Mailer level: Opt-In vs. Opt-out for inclusion of images. Carrie explained how the survey worked and suggested we have the survey taker define their role in the supply chain.

Sharon agreed with the idea of including the role in the survey and suggested it might be weighted based on the role. The Mail Owner would have a higher priority in determining if images are suppressed or not. Angelo agreed with Sharon. Carrie suggested we simplify the categories, make two buckets > mail owner vs. mail supply chain support partners. Paul asked about the importance of segmenting responses by participant role. For example I represent a software vendor. I am going to reach out to my organization and get feedback from clients to get insight as to how to answer the question. In response, Carrie offered the possibility that Mail Owners may have more of a vested interest in whether images are presented or suppressed. If industry responded differently based on their role, then it might be helpful to know that. For now, the simple approach will do. Paul suggested we add an option to the 3 options currently presented – no preference/no opinion.

Sharon suggested we add language to make it clear that Mailers would want to have control of suppressing images based on individual mailings they create. We discussed how we might clarify that survey question, however, decided that this is more of a technical solution rather than something that could be easily conveyed in the survey. This type of clarification would be written up in our resolution document. This type of suppression would need to be indicated in whatever file is submitted in relation to the program.

Tracy noted long term solution options need to be tied to the costs. For example with infrastructure costs, ultimately how does that get passed on? All things being equal – what do you think is in the best interest of the postal service? Unanswered assumption is that, based on the Opt-In/Opt-Out solution, if I only send half my mailing through this program vs all the mailings that the costs would be different. Carrie will include a statement in the survey that associated costs are not known at this time.

Kurt Ruppel liked the idea of conducting a survey to all of MTAC. Of course people outside the workgroup will need to be given some background/education to level set the work the workgroup has done. Sharon suggested we learn from the workgroup survey results and then consider surveying the larger MTAC body if we deem it is appropriate.

We had a request to share some of the direct mail for customer acquisition. The USPS is just starting to see responses. Wendy asked about who would get the direct mail piece. Since she’s in the pilot area, should she have received one of these? Carrie says it depends on your opt-in position in your USPS.com

profile. Wendy had not opted in to receive Marketing from the USPS. The card went out to 34,000 people out of 6 million households in the area. Next steps is email list rental – going to a broader audience than those signed up to MyUSPS.com

Carrie also shared a sample of the email invitation. She noted some restrictions regarding who could be marketed to, again, based on their USPS.com profile.

We reviewed previous discussions on the Do Not Mail Issue. Acknowledging that establishing a network for legislative issues has been effective in the past and needs to be established for the future. On the consumer side, examine the messaging and leverage DMA language. Prepare talking points, etc.

Somewhat related is the notion that the USPS use the Informed Delivery platform to develop a channel to communicate individual consumer comments back to the Mail Owners.

Discussion on Postal Inspection Service Covers Program:

This particular issue was prompted by a recent NY Times article on the postal surveillance program. The issue statement presented was that maybe the mail covers program could be ‘automated’ based on the ability to see images from automated equipment. Carrie spoke to Michael Ray in the inspection service about how we might proceed in terms of fraud and to say the MTAC workgroup saw this potential. Michael acknowledged that he recognized the program could complement the existing program; however, he doesn’t have immediate plans for integration for mail or even for the parcel visibility programs.

Suggest we give workgroup members time to think about it, socialize it etc. We will look to wrap up the issue log for this by the 22nd of January.

Sam asked about the privacy policy at the USPS. Carrie noted the USPS has a policy, however, she hasn’t read it thoroughly. However, USPS does have manuals that talk to how mail images are used and how the mail covers program works. The Inspection service would work with legal and privacy departments to implement a new process. Carrie clarified the current SOP is that USPS uses mailpieces images to sort mail and then discards the data. Now USPS uses the images to deliver to consumers the Informed Delivery product. A statement on this was put into the Postal Bulletin in November 2015.

Carrie reviewed the proposed schedule for the balance of the workgroup efforts including a review of the subgroup work product. In the meeting wrap up, Carrie reminded members that the notes and presentations are all posted on RIBBS.

Jody asked what the path from pilot to rollout might look like. Carrie explained the first step is to merge the participants from the NOVA pilot into the platform being used for the New York area pilot. There have been informal discussions about possibly expanding the pilot to other parts of Virginia, Maryland and the DC area. A full rollout would likely happen in waves, taking in regions/markets like central and west coast parts of the country as next steps.