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- David Reynolds, project leader, Univ. of Iowa College of Dentistry

Dental School Rinses Out Bad Data to Brighten Database

Company

University of Iowa, College of Dentistry

Industry

Education

Challenge

The University of Iowa’s College of Dentistry encountered a problem – too many patient address errors in their database. When a patient enters the university’s dental clinic, they are required to fill out registration cards in order to input their information into a database, or to update their current records.

The clinic’s administrative clerks manually type in the patient’s personal information. Most of the clinic’s database errors were caused by patients intentionally providing fictional billing information; the administration having difficulty reading the patients’ forms; or even simple clerical mistakes.

“Lack of adequate controls on address input created too many address errors,” said David Reynolds, the dental school’s project leader.

Therefore, it was imperative for the university’s clinic to find a solution that would verify and correct addresses and contact information in real-time during data entry – to maintain contact with their patients. Mail is the primary form of communication between the clinic and their patients. The dental school sends reminder cards, correspondence letters, billing statements, and promotional mailings.

Solution

Melissa Data’s Data Quality Suite, a toolkit of customizable APIs that verifies, corrects and standardizes contact data including street address, phone, full name and email address.

About University of Iowa

For more than 125 years, the College of Dentistry has been an integral part of The University of Iowa and a resource to the state of Iowa. The College of Dentistry is currently the only dental school with advanced programs in all recognized specialty areas. Outreach programs focus on children, special needs patients, and seniors, including a national award-winning Geriatric Mobile Dental Unit.

Benefits

- » Reduces fraudulent entries
- » Catch data-input errors at point-of-entry or in batch
- » Fully automate data cleansing process
- » Standardize data for fast efficient database management and processing

Results

The dental clinic invested in the Data Quality Suite. The clinic mainly uses the suite's CASS™ Certified address correction component – Address Object – to clean up their database of incorrect, incomplete and undeliverable addresses in real-time.

Verifying patient addresses in real-time makes for faster, more efficient service. “Real-time verification allows immediate feedback to the clerk, and the opportunity to interact further with the patient, if there were address errors,” Reynolds said.

In the near future, the clinic also will tackle verifying addresses in batch mode for the occasional address that by-passed online verification.

Utilizing the solution has helped the dental school cut back on returned mail. “We have less returned mail as a result of address cleaning,” Reynolds said. “We are striving for as accurate data at the point of capture as possible, and for as little subsequent management as possible ... we expect further time savings by using address forwarding updates [such as NCOA^{Link®}] in the near future.”



About Melissa Data

Melissa Data is a leading provider of data quality, marketing and mailing solutions. Melissa Data helps companies acquire and retain customers, validate and enhance data, improve marketing ROI, and save money on postage and mail processing. Since 1985, Melissa Data has helped companies like Mercury Insurance, Xerox, Disney, AAA, and Nestle improve customer communications.

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