



Complete Guide to

# Data Hygiene

*Over half a billion deceased,  
goneaway and home mover  
records at your fingertips.*

[www.thesoftwarebureau.com](http://www.thesoftwarebureau.com)

# Data Hygiene

The benefits of data hygiene have long been promoted by marketing associations, business schools and data specialists and yet every year in the UK almost **60 million** pieces of direct mail are still mistargeted – sent multiple times, sent to people that have moved or to people that have passed away. This is not only expensive, costing UK businesses **£1 billion** per year in wasted marketing costs and brand damage, but it is also irrevocably eroding the reputation of an industry that contributes over **£10 billion** each year to the economy and is proven to be an extremely effective and cost efficient form of marketing.

MPs and the media have their claws out and if these mailings don't stop the bottom line is that direct mail will be legislated out of existence. Telemarketing is already on the way out; direct mail will be next.





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For as long as The Software Bureau has been in existence data hygiene providers have always questioned why an organisation would not suppress. After all data cleansing pays for itself hundreds of times over. But the data industry failed to realise quite how daunting the market is. There are scores of files available all with different claims regarding their effectiveness and coverage.

Companies can buy direct or go through a bureau and understanding what is mandatory and what is best practice adds yet another layer of confusion.

The suppression industry also suffers from a legacy hangover. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some direct marketing managers would prefer to send mistargeted mailings because in the past suppression files removed the names of legitimate prospects costing them thousands in unrealised revenue. But the files have, over the years, evolved with better matching technology and data sources and consequently confidence levels are much higher than previously.

Mistargeted direct mail costs UK businesses **£1 billion** per year in wasted marketing costs.

With GDPR coming into force in 2018 data hygiene will be an essential part of proving an organisation's commitment and responsibility towards the personal data that they hold. This is why we have compiled this guide which is a 'warts and all' overview of the suppression and home mover data market. It has been designed to create a completely impartial and transparent summary of what is available on the market so that marketers can make more informed decisions when it comes to looking after their data.

# How to Buy Suppression and Home Mover Data

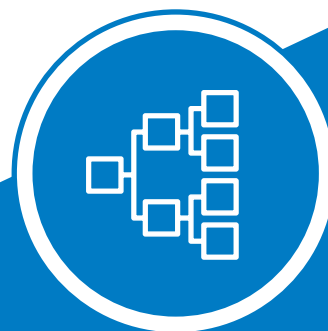
As a consumer when we are buying a car we have a checklist of items to run through before we make our purchase. This might include an investigation of previous owners, looking at its accident history and mileage etc. Knowing what questions to ask reduces the risk of buying a dud. Buying suppression is no different. The following are the three key areas you should explore before making a decision.



**Size:** The number of records is important in terms of ensuring that your entire database is covered.



**Recency:** Whilst historical records can be useful in certain cases, it is the up-to-date data you should care most about. Finding out how often the file is updated and the time between death/home move and appearing in the file.



**Provenance:** Make yourself aware of how the data is compiled, checked and verified. Sometimes this means asking awkward questions. Don't be afraid to dig deep, it is your brand on the line! If you can't face the thought of managing your data hygiene in-house, consider outsourcing to a data bureau who will ensure your data is well looked after.





# 1.5 million

Households move each  
year in the UK

# 500 thousand

People die each year in  
the UK

# Deceased Suppression



## What is it?

Deceased suppression files enable marketers to identify and remove the names of customers that have passed away from their databases.

## Business Benefit

The cold hard economics state that sending a piece of direct mail to someone that is deceased is a waste of money because that person can no longer respond. But on a more emotional level it can also be extremely distressing for the family members that are left behind. Imagine receiving a mailing in the name of your recently deceased partner – it serves as a very painful reminder of your loss. This is an extremely sensitive topic and one that the media takes great delight in splashing over their front pages. Many household brands have found themselves in the middle of a PR nightmare as a result of a mistargeted mailing, exacerbated by the reach of social

media. Furthermore, research reveals that that two thirds (66 per cent) of consumers would boycott an organisation if they received a piece of direct mail in the name of a loved one that had passed away meaning the brand damage associated with mailing the deceased can run into the thousands.

## Watch Out

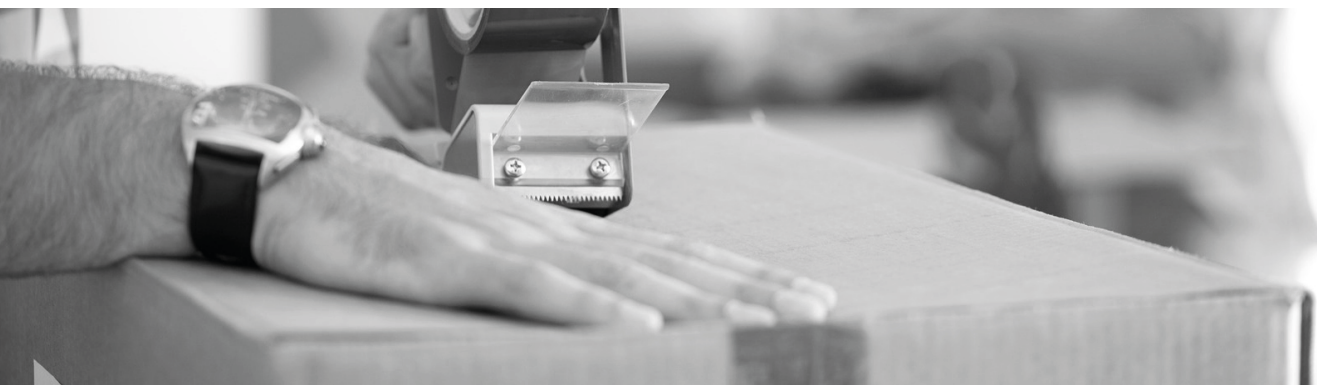
Understanding where the data comes from is the most important issue in deceased suppression. Some files are derived from officially verified data from sources such as registrars or probate, others are built from information provided by the bereaved's family and friends. The source of the data raises questions about accuracy and recency. Understanding the level of confidence (i.e. how sure the source is that the person is deceased) and how long it takes for them to be listed can have significant implications for some campaigns.

# Deceased Files Available in Cygnus

File / Supplier	Size	Sources	Updated	USP
 <b>Mortascreen</b> by Wilmington Millennium	10 million	Probate data, Funeral Director Data, DPS registration	Weekly	Largest file collecting 70% of deaths within 2 weeks. Verified data and data collected from the bereaved.
 <b>The Bereavement Register</b> by REaD Group	8.5 million	2 CRA's, the Bereavement Support Network NHS Hospitals Hospices Funeral Directors UK Registrars TBR Registrations	Monthly	Data from 2 CRA's and Partnership with the Bereavement Support Network to capture information within 48hrs of death.
 <b>National Deceased Register</b> by The Ark	5.8 million	Financial services products including life insurance, pensions and annuities	Monthly	The file does not contain any volunteered data and delivers high levels of accuracy.
 <b>disConnect</b> by Equifax	1 million	CRA data	Monthly	Meets DM industry call for improved suppression.
 <b>Mortality</b> by Experian	2.7 million	Public Record Information, proprietary Experian deceased data	Monthly	Validation techniques are used to check the flag before adding the record to the file.



# Goneaway Suppression



## What is it?

Goneaway suppression enables marketers to identify and remove the names and addresses of people that have moved house from their databases

## Business Benefit





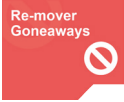

People in the UK are some of the most prolific home movers in the world. Stats show that on average we move eight times in our lifetime, which is almost double the amount of moves made by people in France, Germany and Spain. As a result of all of these home moves; around 11 per cent of the population or seven million people move every year meaning that customer data can very quickly decay. Like deceased mailings sending a mail pack to someone that has moved is a waste of money. To hope that the new occupant might open it and convert is not a smart strategy, it's a wasteful one. For a start, it is illegal to open a letter addressed to someone else.

## Watch Out

Goneaway data is compiled from various different sources. As a result the confidence levels of confirmed goneaways can vary. For example, records derived from credit reference agencies are more likely to give false positives since CRAs are risk averse and err on the side of caution, whilst change of address data sourced from a redirections service provides an almost 100 per cent guarantee that the person has moved. This means it is important to consider what type of goneaway screening you use. Moreover, if customers are flagged as goneaway and you feel that you have had transactions with them recently what do you do? This is where the expertise of a bureau comes in as they can help determine the confidence level and whether or not to suppress.



# Goneaway Files Available in Cygnus

File / Supplier	Size	Sources	Updated	USP
 <b>NCOA Suppress</b> by Royal Mail	48.5 million	Redirection service provided from the old address	Monthly	Consumers verified, known date of move, full and partial move information.
 <b>GAS</b> by REaD Group	94 million	2 CRA's	Monthly	Data from 2 CRA's increases coverage. Up to 10 years Historic data.
 <b>disConnect</b> by Equifax	62 million	CRA data	Monthly	500,000 new records monthly, 10 yrs historical data.
 <b>Absolute Movers</b> by Experian	68 million	LGA data CRA data	Monthly	Customer informed moves.
 <b>Re-mover</b> by The Ark	68 million	Land Registry, Property Transactions, Electoral Roll LGA data	Monthly	Many records are provided within the month of move.
 <b>Purifi</b> by DBS Data	31 million	LifeBase database, residential property	Monthly	Confirmed movers based on DBS consumer universe lifebase.

**“Since investing in Cygnus we have grown revenues and profits and enhanced our relationships with our clients furthering our marketing services offering.”**

Liam Baldwin - Technical Director, Kingsline Solutions

# Home Mover Tracing

## What is it?

Home mover files enable marketers to find customers that have moved house but failed to inform them of their new address.

## Business Benefit

Research shows that when asked to rank the organisations that people would tell they were moving house; heavy direct marketing users including retail, charity and entertainment sectors were at the bottom of the pecking order. Organisations with a financial interest were ranked highest in order of priority, with employers, governmental agencies and financial services coming first, second and third respectively.






Home movers categorised five types of organisation as 'essential to inform', but the research showed that despite this they were not rushing to tell them their new address. Typically, the top tier was advised of a new address within three weeks of a move, whilst organisations categorized as 'important' were told within two months and non-essential organisations (direct mailers) were not told at all. The lack of information was not an attempt to sever ties with suppliers or companies, but more a result of moving overload. Typically movers have 39 essential or important organisations to inform of their relocation and consequently non-essential companies fall to the bottom of the list.

Losing track of a customer is easy as up to a third of an organisation's database can move house each year but with the introduction of GDPR in 2018 knowing where they have moved to will become crucial. This is because the new EU directive includes more rigorous requirements for obtaining consent for collecting personal data. Marketers will need opted-in permission from consumers to use their data as opposed to the more favourable and current opt-out model. Customer acquisition will consequently become more legally challenging and infinitely more expensive. The focus will therefore be on retaining permissioned contacts no matter if they move house.

## Watch Out

Finding old contacts is like Christmas and birthdays rolled into one. They were once engaged with your organisation and are therefore far more likely to be so again than a cold prospect. However, this information can only be used for direct marketing purposes – no matter how tempting it might be to alter account details, for example. This goes for goneaway and deceased suppression data too. Legally the data can only be used to remove names of movers and deceased people from a database – it cannot be used to close accounts or flag fraud - there are other products that do this. Suppression and home mover products are **ONLY** for the purposes of direct marketing.

# Home Mover Files Available in Cygnus

File / Supplier	Size	Sources	Updated	USP
 <b>Absolute Contacts</b> by Experian	21 million	Electoral Roll, CRA data	Monthly	Fully verified.
 <b>GAS REaCtive</b> by REaD Group	25 million	2 CRA's, transactional data, electoral role, bespoke database	Monthly	Opted in data from 2 CRA's and unique new occupier data.
 <b>NCOA Update</b> by Royal Mail	21 million	Redirection service provided to the new address	Monthly	Movers verified at application, known date of move.
 <b>Purifi</b> by DBS Data	180,000	LifeBase database, residential property	Monthly	Confirmed movers based on DBS consumer universe lifebase.
 <b>reConnect</b> by Equifax	50 million	Equifax unique address links	Monthly	Monthly updates of up to 1.8 million.

**“First Move are all about marketing ROI so with the enrichment service offered by The Software Bureau we can help our customers drive up the performance of their campaigns.”**

David Amor, Managing Director, First Move

# B2B Suppression



## What is it?

B2B suppression files enable senders of B2B DM to remove businesses that have moved or closed down from their databases. Some files also operate on an individual employee level removing the names of people that have moved jobs or passed away from the database.

## Business Benefit

Despite the B2B DM market being only six per cent of the size of its consumer cousin, it is responsible for almost a quarter of the direct mail sent in the UK. Furthermore, research shows that two thirds of the 1 billion items of addressed mail sent to businesses contain one or more errors. Business data decays at more three times that of consumer data, meaning that within four months a third of records within a business database could be out of date.

## Watch Out



Keep an eye out for recency since B2B data does not tend to get refreshed as regularly as B2C data.



One business  
moves office every  
six minutes



## B2B Files Available in Cygnus

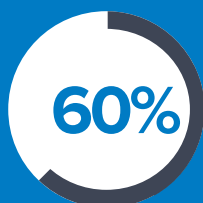
File / Supplier	Size	Sources	Updated	USP	
 REaD Group	<b>Business Suppression File</b> by REaD Group	7 million	D&B, Experian, Thomson, Yell and Companies House	Quarterly	Data on companies and employees.
 Royal Mail	<b>Business Changes File</b> by Royal Mail	300,000	Royal Mail Redirections service and data from Yell	Monthly  Four-five thousand new records every month	Nearly all businesses that move premise use Royal Mail's redirection service.

**Over 500 Million Suppression and Home  
Mover Records Embedded within Cygnus**

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# Why Data Hygiene?

## RELEVANCE



Almost 60% of consumers believe that a correctly addressed piece of mail which uses their name suggests that the mailing will be relevant or of interest to them.



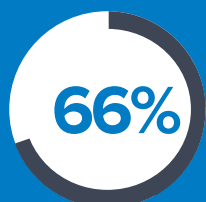
## REVENUE

Businesses which persist in mailing the deceased miss out on £328.4m in unrealised potential revenue, on top of the £154.5m wasted on postage and production costs, totalling nearly £500m.



One of the most valuable assets a business has is its customer data, but with annual data decay exceeding 30% in some cases it is becoming increasingly challenging to maintain. The suppression and home mover files available within Cygnus offer comprehensive access to over 500 million records enabling you to maintain brand and cut marketing costs.

## SENTIMENT



66% of consumers would boycott an organisation that sent direct mail to a loved one that was deceased.

## BRAND



20% of UK adults received direct mail intended for a family member who has passed away in the past year. On average they received 15 pieces of direct mail addressed to deceased.

<http://www.wilmingtonmillennium.co.uk/news-repository/decline-in-junked-mail.aspx>

<http://www.wilmingtonmillennium.co.uk/news-repository/the-true-cost-of-mailing-the-dead-brand-damage.aspx>



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This guide was produced by The Software Bureau,  
a specialist software business, focused solely on data cleansing and data processing  
solutions for the direct mail market. Find out more about Cygnus, the UK's leading data  
processing software at **[www.thesoftwarebureau.com](http://www.thesoftwarebureau.com)**