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June 2017

Contents:

UPU Changing Categories of Mail

GADA member Merry Law has taken more than a little time to master the nuances, or lack thereof, of the UPU's Integrated Product Plan, which is the basis for and outline of the regulations for international letter mail effective on the first day of 2018. She has graciously offered to share her work with our membership.

UPU's Integrated Product Plan and International Mailers

By Merry Law, WorldVu LLC

The Universal Postal Union (UPU), is the primary forum for cooperation among national postal designated operators. Among other activities, it sets the rules for international mail exchanges with rules and regulations set out for Letter Mail and Parcel Post. The 192-member countries meet in a quadrennial Congress, most recently in Istanbul in October 2016, to set policy and direction for the UPU.

At the Istanbul Congress, a proposal for an Integrated Product Plan was passed. This document will form the basis of changes to the regulations for international letter mail, beginning in January 2018. The changes will apply to mail to and from the United States, but any UPU actions requiring changes to USPS mailing requirements are reviewed and implemented according to US laws and procedures. Domestic mail is not affected by UPU regulations. But the changes are substantial and any mailer sending items internationally needs to be aware of what's coming.

The goals of the IPP should provide more consistency in postal products and treatment among all countries. The IPP will be enacted in two phases if the current plan is followed, with the first in January 2018, and the second in January 2020, following an extraordinary UPU meeting of all countries later in 2018. Those goals are to

• eliminate the product and weight silos in the current UPU service requirements,

• establish postal service categories based on the content of postal items (documents or goods),

• provide consistency across a 0 – 30 kg weight range,

• be compliant with security and customs requirements for electronic advanced data (EAD) and

• align remuneration and tariffs with the level of service provided.

Beginning in January 2018, postal items will be differentiated as "documents" or "goods". Since postal items will be differentiated by content, a definition for both documents and goods has been introduced into the UPU Acts. The broad definitions in the Acts, below, are not precise. There is no current plan to develop more detailed definitions by the UPU. Whether the definitions that each country will develop will differ from each other or from the definitions of goods and documents used for customs is not known at this time.

• Definition of "documents" in the UPU Acts: "a letter-post, parcel-post or EMS item consisting of any piece of written, drawn, printed or digital information, excluding objects of merchandise, whose physical specifications lie within the limits specified in the Regulations"

• Definition of "goods" in the Acts: "a letter-post, parcel-post or EMS item consisting of any tangible and movable object other than money, including objects of merchandise, which does not fall under the definition of "documents" as provided in paragraph 1.4 above and whose physical specifications lie within the limits specified in the Regulations"

The definition for the letter format ("E") will be amended to small packets containing goods up to a weight of 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds) will be classified letter-post items. The definition of small letters ("P") and large letters ("G") will be amended in the Letter Post Regulation and their content will be restricted to documents only up to a total weight of 500 grams (1.1 pounds). As of January 2018, flats sent to other countries cannot contain goods.

A "menu approach" will be used for service level, price and value-added services. The value-added services will apply to both document and goods categories. The menu includes payment on delivery, tracking, signature on delivery, consignment service, delivery options, insurance, express delivery service, delivery to the addressee in person (for trackable items), registration, merchandise return service, international business reply service, and free of charges and fees delivery service. (There are details still to be decided.)

Future customs and security requirements will make the provision of electronic advance data (EAD) mandatory on all postal items containing goods. This will require an amendment of the Letter Post Regulation and make the application of the UPU's S10 barcode identifier to small packets obligatory. While the USPS anticipated regulations will take priority for US mailers, more information on this barcode is available on the UPU website. It is scheduled to become effective January 1, 2018.

Every country will make any necessary changes to their postal rules or regulations to meet the requirements of the UPU's IPP for international mail. (Domestic mail is not affected by UPU.)

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FORWARD IF ADDRESS PROVIDED?

What 3 Words.

To view this Youtube file: Quiqup | Street addresses vs what3words | what3words

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsE_DR3Oz-s&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=52664188&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8u2Dli8Qrr1Yo67XgM56oRyd8DX-rQ2_tcJExCVxHLnybMvREdXJE1hujPhigi8rSMT5HCvIX4kx05sunw43MfIRcGvsJK3iwBo6D9vHUCENXhVVA&_hsmi=52664189

This cute little movie on Facebook follows two delivery agents using motorcycles to make 20 deliveries in London. One uses the regular addressing system, and a mobile phone to reach clients, and the other What3Words, and no mobile phone. Not surprising is that the W3W driver finished his day earlier than "The Old Way" (TOW). For example, measuring the time the deliverers spent finding the delivery point measured from when they came within 80 yards of the delivery point, W3W was twice as fast. He also never had to call the customer, compared to TOW.

In fact, W3W was 30% more efficient on the day. That means, of course, that more daily deliveries can be made by a driver, which is noted by the owner and founder of the participating delivery company, Quiqup.

London, of course, is very well-fitted with addresses for the most part, although the system has its problem knots. On some streets, there seems to be some reversal of numbering systems at a certain point without apparent reason. This once confused us for 20 minutes while searching for the Direct Marketing Association building. It has been said that many of London's streets originated as paths made at the time of the Roman occupation by foraging cows, and English cows were random wanderers. Square intersections are a rarity and little lanes run busily everywhere. If the W3W data is accessible to a handheld device and the map into which it is inserted runs smoothly, this is a terrific tool.

And this use of the W3W indicator to deliver a parcel to a discrete area of a large lobby space, crowded with folks going about their business, is bound to be more efficient, and accurate, than to deliver to the building address, which may cover a half of an acre or more. W3W is simply more "accurate" with respect to specific patches of the planet.

The traditional street name and address system is, nevertheless, well-designed for its original purpose: provide the public and public services and functions with a system which locates buildings, streets and public services in relationship to one another on a physical map.

And this is where W3W cannot compare. Assume that Elm Street runs East/West and starts at River Street, going East to Orchard Road. The buildings and lots bear consecutive numbers starting at River Street and going up, even numbers on the North side and odd numbers on the South. A kid on a bicycle doing his older brother's newspaper route can find 18 just by looking at the numbers on the buildings. No Internet or mobile is needed. (Yes, that little kid is the Editor.)

For a W3W location, it's likely the address will not be displayed on the front of the house, if any is displayed at all. If there is one for 18 Elm St., it will bear no resemblance to the "address" of 20 Elm St. since both appear to be random collections of letters and numbers with no continuity between them. In fact, since one has to have a mobile phone with the W3W file on it or accessible from it, there's no practical reason to display the number on the building.

Philippines may get a new address form.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) of the Philippines is working with a Singapore-based Filipino startup through its Philippine Trade and Investment Center (PTIC) in Singapore, to fix the postal code system in the Philippines. It is anticipated that this will make deliveries more efficient.

The Philippine postal code is a four-digit number representing a barangay (the smallest administrative division in the Philippines and the native Filipino term for a village, district or ward) within a city or city district (as in the case for Manila) within Metro Manila, and outside Metro Manila, a town or city. In general, more than one code is issued for areas within Metro

Manila, and provincial areas are issued one code for each town and city, reducing the utility of the postal code in locating addresses.

The startup by four Filipinos from Cebu has developed an app called Geopik, which uses "geohashing" and geolocation technologies, similar to that used by apps such as Waze or Google Maps, to create a digital address system, with exact, customizable and easy-to-remember single codes. We are unable to locate a website of the developers.

Nevertheless, the press is reporting that the developers plan to map the address of every residential or commercial establishment in the country.

The press release gives an example of a long, wordy, inexact address, "house with blue gate, in front of a mango tree". Geopik will supposedly eliminate the hassle caused by addresses such as this and in lieu thereof provide an address that, we are told, looks like this: W3B9-AC9F-5H

While it may be an apparent improvement on the former "address", it will certainly be a challenge for any visitor to deal with. And we suspect the system will have the same problem of addresses will not be sequential, just like W3W.

The "South Pacific Report" from Addressing Homes-Progress in Palau.

Preparing tools for the Palau users includes creating an app to give access to the data. This has also involved the company producing its own map through the purchase of orthorectified satellite imagery. Out of this comes very useful data.

Michael Olsen explains, "We get our physical location by using a TRIMBLE devise. We've had to work with TRIMBLE software engineers so that the TRIMBLE devise ties into our orthorectified aerial data that we purchase from a satellite company. Our AimLocate Software engineers work with TRIMBLE software engineers and engineers from the satellite company to insure all software was speaking the same language (however that works). The TRIMBLE devise, the orthorectified satellite imagery and AimLocate software is currently giving us a sub-meter accuracy in Palau. The addresses are currently taking less than 2 minutes to complete an address with post code, City, ownership data with an identifying picture and then uploading to a searchable data base."

The Politics of it all. Address systems in most countries are considered important government projects, and Palau is no different.   The project could not proceed unless the country adopted appropriate legislation. Addressing Homes has assisted the Country of Palau in establishing specifications and legislation in order that all structures are to have a physical address. Once the legislation and specifications were approved by the Palau Government, naming of streets and paths began and the company's contract with the government was approved.

Public hearings were held to notify the citizens that they'll be receiving an address and, importantly, why they are. The company has dedicated two employees to attend the Public Hearings and an informational Power Point explaining the system is presented to attendees. Addressing Homes employees also answer any questions the public might have.

In addition, the company has a few government employees with its two addressing employees as addresses are being created. The role of the former is to learn the system and answer questions from residents. In addition, they take notes about the location of infrastructure such as utilities.

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Alastair Tempest reports from South Africa

African Trade Ministers Express their concerns on ecommerce rules at the WTO, and call on the African Union to start discussing ecommerce.

On 9 June at the World Trade Organization's meeting in Paris, African Trade Ministers acknowledged that some of the new issues such as e-commerce are the alternative gateway in a world where trade patterns are changing. Even though e-commerce is a part of the new world with huge advantages for many people, it could also "land up in a winner takes it all model as it is skewed towards the few while many others will be left behind. That is what is happening now and until that is changed, multilateral cooperation has a role to play in creating inclusivity," South African Trade Minister, Rob Davies said.

He also emphasized that "If members [of WTO] just have the traditional rules for trade on e-commerce, that will freeze the status quo and enhance and strengthens the advantages of the early comers against the late entrants."

The World Trade Organization (WTO) started work on ecommerce back in 1998, and has been busy ever since creating guidelines for customs duties and tariffs through the global agreements on tariffs and trade (GATT) and TRIPS frameworks. The WTO work has often been criticized as benefiting the developed world.   In a separate move, a number of African Trade Ministers have pointed out that the African Union had not yet considered ecommerce but that this topic should be added to their agenda before the end of the year.

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Addressing Standards Development News from the Universal Postal Union (UPU)

Dr. Josef Lubenow, one of the most highly regarded addressing standards expert in the field, has graciously agreed to describe the development status of two important standards -S42 and S53. The implications for those who maintain substantial address databases, and for those who build their businesses on them, are substantial. As the UPU members continue to implement cross-border e-commerce efficiencies, and cross-border volumes further increase, these standards will play an important role in making shipment and delivery more accurate and efficient, and thus less expensive, and ease the work of those maintaining customer files and records.

On June 28, the UPU Standards Board, meeting in Bern, advanced the addressing standard S53 (Exchange of Name and Address Data) to Status 1, matching the prior recognition of S42 (International Postal Address Components and Template Language) at the same level.

Whereas S42 has an exact parallel in ISO 19160-4 from the International Organization for Standardization and CEN 19160-4 from the European Committee for Standardization, both recognized in 2017 by the leading global and European standards bodies, respectively, S53 is itself only a UPU standard.

However, the combination of S42 and S53 is exceptionally powerful and offers a very flexible way to map, to store and to render global postal addresses. By using XML, which incorporates UNICODE, all manner of languages and scripts can be combined together in the same file.

There is an available reference implementation, a software program that processes S42 templates using S53 data sets. It can be used by UPU members and the S42 working group as well as by other entities of all kinds for noncommercial purposes. This means that powerful tools can be developed and tested to enable address validation on a cross border basis as well as domestically. It provides a further opportunity for the UPU to play an important role in global e-commerce based on internationally recognized standards and such databases as its members make available to subscribers.

The main use of S53 is to format addresses in such a way that they can be processed by S42 rendition engines to create mailing addresses that meet country specified rendition rules and are suitable for domestic or cross border mailings. An address record includes components, associated data, and stored renditions that can be compared against renditions assembled with the help of templates to determine matches. When all of a well-chosen sample set of addresses match their targets, the template, which functions as a kind of algorithm, can be considered for approval by the country which provided the data and added to the downloadable library maintained by the UPU.

Some features of S53 make it a good companion to S42 in developing systems that meet complex customer requirements and can process addresses for which matches are not known in advance. For example, S53 supports composites, which are logical groupings of elements, as well as the extensive S42 list of elements and sub elements. Ideally, a user will have a name broken down into a form of address such as "Mr.", a given name like "Frank", and a surname such as "Jones", but sometimes this information has not been broken down, even though the name for mailing purposes is known to be "Mr. Frank Jones".

With S42 alone, the name needs to be broken down into elements, and then a template is used to assemble the rendition. But with S53, the name can be a composite, while the delivery point segment of the address may be divided into S42 elements for analytic purposes and to ensure accuracy.

S53 also can incorporate external fields such as a marketing code which may not be an identified S42 element but may nonetheless have a known position in a postal address, perhaps just under, on, or above the name line. Using S53, they can be added to an S42 template and managed as part of a mailing program as may be appropriate. This approach could also be used for production information such as container numbers, or for geocodes that may serve as premises identifiers in areas which do not have unique postcodes for every possible delivery point.

It is believed that any feasible set of rendition requirements can be met by the combination of standardized elements, composites, and external elements with suitable logical operators to manage matters such as punctuation. The challenge is to know what information one has and to have it properly identified rather than located somewhere in an undifferentiated address block. But this is also what is necessary for better control of international addresses and for validation of these addresses to ensure secure and timely delivery.

Importantly, S53 files can mix and match addresses from multiple countries. With 48 country templates already approved covering a majority of the world's postal delivery points, and more being developed, whether formal or informal, the possibility now exists to do global mailings based on rendition rules that accord with the requirements of each country.

It should be emphasized that the country needs to be identified or else at least be identifiable for this process to work properly. Many customer files do already contain the identifying information, and specialized vendors are in place to help clients with certain problematic situations. Under project guidelines that date back to 2001 in the UPU and CEN, and to 2008 in ISO/TC 211, and development involving over a hundred experts in address formats of specific countries from every part of the world, S42 and S53 together constitute an important step forward toward seamless and accurate processing of international postal addresses. More information is available at www.upu.int for those interested.

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Look for us again within the next two months. Send all news, comments and announcements to……

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