



March 27, 2013

SnailWorks Launches Mail Tracking Mail Tracking is Great Again!

Beginning in April, SnailWorks™ will be offering standalone mail tracking using data from the USPS IMb Tracing service. The SnailWorks team is hardly new to mail tracking – we created the industry-standard mail tracking system back in 2000, as well as one of the first systems to use the Intelligent Mail barcode in 2006. With mail tracking being an essential component of the SnailWorks system, offering a tracking-only option is a natural.

According to our SnailWorks Reaction Prediction System (SwRPS) there are only three possible reactions to this news:

1. Wow! Sign me up! (The SwRPS refers to this as a “correct” reaction);
2. Why should I care when my mail gets delivered? (We really need to talk);
3. Oh. I’m already using a swell mail tracking company. Oh, and a fourth possible reaction:
4. Isn’t the Postal Service getting ready to offer this for free?

OK, let’s start with number 4. “Free” from the Postal Service delivers exactly the value you have paid for. Bless their hearts, they are pretty good at delivering mail, as much as they may dislike doing it. They are **not** good at reporting. They have tried this before – it is simply beyond their abilities. **Tracking your mail is important – use a professional.** Use SnailWorks™ or use one of our competitors if you must, but do not trust the USPS with this one.

Speaking of our competitors, there are some fine mail tracking companies out there. SnailWorks, however, offers some key advantages in leveraging the latest web technologies while offering quick intuitive reports that give you the information you need at your fingertips. First-scan reports, last-scan reports, forwarded and returned mail reports give you actionable data that you can put to use in making your mailing operations better. And speaking of action, best of all, SnailWorks™ tracking is part of the SnailWorks™ platform, a complete coordinated marketing system. SnailWorks tracking data can be used to trigger other marketing actions – we offer **active triggering technologies** that can create trigger files specifically designed to tie in your other marketing channels – email, telemarketing, social media, and more. Other tracking systems let you know when your mail is delivered – *SnailWorks Tracking does something about it.*

Which brings us to the question – Why track your mail at all? I’m glad you asked (OK, I actually deeply sighed when you asked - you should know this already.) Here are a few of the benefits:

- Coordinate other marketing channels – This is what SnailWorks is all about!
- Offer “proof” of mailing – a first scan indicates that your mail is in the custody of the Postal Service;
- Identify and rectify mail delays while the mail is still in the mail stream;
- Plan mail drops based on historical delivery times;
- Identify mail pieces that are forwarded or returned and remove or correct them – automatically;
- Peace of mind – just know your mail got there.

And finally were back at the top of the list – “Wow! Sign me up!” It turns out, if you have a SnailWorks account, you are signed up. If you don’t have a SnailWorks account we can help resolve that for you. Just click [here](#) to learn more!

National Postal Forum Update Or “What we learned on our spring vacation.”

The Postal Service held their annual conference in San Francisco this year, while protestors picketed outside that mailing industry folks did not look sufficiently unhappy. Come sit through a few “Getting Ready for Full-Service” seminars and see if you still have the spirit left in you to lift that picket sign. *Whee.*

It was an unusual forum with lots of mixed messages. The Postal Service spent a lot of time talking about five-day delivery, while congress very visibly said there would be six-day delivery. There were a lot of gee-whiz technologies discussed, while the exhibit hall was one of the smallest in memory. A couple of highlights:

- USPS is not backing down on Full-Service IMb in January 2014. Expect a simplified version to be announced with less pre-testing required. While it may be required for automation discounts in January 2014, it is most likely to be unenforced until July, 2014, and then with a big margin of error allowed. They have done this before with other difficult-to-comply-with rules.
- Letter carriers will be equipped with GPS devices so that you will be able to tell, sort-of, when mail was put in the mail box. Carriers won’t scan the mail, but the Intelligent Mail system will know they have it in their bag, and when the GPS thing indicates that they have passed by the house, it will be assumed that they put it in the mail box. We’re not sure this is valuable, but it is interesting;
- Another service being tested will allow homeowners to go to a website and see what mail they are getting that day, or at least whom it is from. We suppose this will either heighten or diminish their desire to get home that day, based on their enthusiasm for the day’s mail. There remain a lot of technical challenges to making this work in a meaningful way;
- Without actually hollering “SnailWorks is the future!”, many of the sessions, including the Postmaster General’s opening remarks, endorsed the importance of tying the mail to other marketing channels. The Postal Service sees this as an important ingredient in keeping mail relevant.

The one recurrent theme to the forum was that the Postal Service and the mailing industry both see trackability, control of mail, and its coordination with other channels as the driving factors in keeping marketing mail relevant today and for the near future. We couldn’t agree more.

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