

INTERNATIONAL
ADDRESSES
FOR BUSINESSES
101

smorty

INTRODUCTION



International addresses present greater complexity compared to domestic addresses within a single country. Different languages, character set issues, and unfamiliar address formats pose common challenges. However, taking steps to validate global addresses provides significant benefits. Proper address verification reduces shipping errors, improves deliverability, and gives businesses more accurate customer data.

This guide aims to share best practices for validating addresses across countries worldwide. While covering general principles applicable globally, we'll focus on major ecommerce shipping destinations. Looking at specific examples from key nations helps showcase the diversity of international address formats. We'll review the structure used in countries like the United Kingdom (UK), Japan, Australia, and more.

In addition to addressing variations, we'll also explain how to interpret postal codes. Postal codes provide hints about address validity in many countries. We'll decode the meaning behind code components in systems like those used in Canada and the UK.

You'll also learn how to analyze address validation results. We'll define the different match quality codes and precision levels. Checking these return flags ensures your business only accepts correctly verified addresses.

With the proper guidelines and tools, international addresses don't have to be intimidating. Consistently validating global addresses reduces costs, enhances logistics, and improves the customer experience.

The lessons in this guide will set you on the path to success, no matter where your customers are located.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



1. Specifying Country Designators

2. Managing Transliteration

3. International Address Formats

4. Postal Codes

5. Analyzing Results

6. Additional Resources

SPECIFYING COUNTRY DESIGNATORS

01



When preparing to validate any international address, the first essential step is indicating which country that address belongs to. If you're vetting international address validation providers, make sure they offer you flexibility in designating countries. We suggest that, at the bare minimum, they're able to read country inputs designated by four different standards:

Full Country Name

The fully spelled-out name of the country (e.g., Japan, United Kingdom, Canada) can be used. This is the most human-readable format - but also the most complicated as there are endonyms (names used by a native, like Deutschland) and exonyms (names used by a foreigner, like Germany).

ISO-2 Two-Letter Code

The two-letter ISO-2 country code (e.g., JP for Japan, GB for the United Kingdom, CA for Canada) is commonly used in many systems and datasets. However, relying solely on ISO-2 poses some risks.

ISO-3 Three-Letter Code

The three-letter ISO-3 country code (e.g., JPN for Japan, GBR for the United Kingdom, CAN for Canada) is the more commonly used standard as it is more precise than ISO-2.

ISO-N Numeric Code

The numeric ISO-N country code (e.g., 392 for Japan, 826 for the United Kingdom, 124 for Canada) provides another option for denoting a country.

Supporting this range of formats provides important adaptability when dealing with diverse global address data. Other validation APIs may only permit the ISO-2 standard two-letter codes. However, relying solely on ISO-2 can create integration headaches:

- » Country codes can change over time as geopolitical boundaries shift. Outdated ISO-2 codes may cause validation failures.
- » Different datasets use conflicting codes for the same country at times. Mismatched ISO-2 codes result in address routing errors.

By supporting multiple code formats, Smarty avoids potential mapping issues and downtime when standards evolve. Our system can smoothly parse addresses no matter the notation used:

- » Full country names provide clarity for humans reading data.
- » ISO-2 remains the most common standard used across digital systems.
- » ISO-3 and ISO-N allow integration with datasets using alternative codes.

This versatility enables seamless operation, even as systems and data standards develop. Whether you adopt full names, alphanumeric codes, or simple numeric IDs, Smarty accepts all major country designator formats.

Our expansive country code support removes a common point of failure in international address processing. Adapting to multiple notations avoids blocked or misrouted data caused by coding discrepancies. Given Smarty's flexible country coding, the first step toward accurate global address verification is easy.



MANAGING TRANSLITERATION

02



In the interconnected world of today's business landscape, the ability to accurately manage address data from diverse linguistic backgrounds is paramount. This is where the concept of transliteration comes into play. Smarty, the address data intelligence company based in Provo, Utah, excels at solving this problem.

What is Transliteration?

Transliteration involves the art of translating names and addresses between different writing systems. For instance, consider converting Asian language characters into the Latin alphabet. Transliterating Japanese (Kanji), with its intricate characters and symbols, into Latin letters allows shipping systems restricted to Latin characters to process orders from Japan.

The Complexities of Transliteration

Performing accurate transliteration isn't a straightforward task; it comes with its own set of complexities:

Non-Phonetic Writing

Many languages, especially Asian ones, don't have a one-to-one correspondence between sounds and characters. The same symbol may represent different pronunciations based on context. Translating these addresses accurately requires a deep understanding of linguistic nuances.

Extra Sounds

Some languages, including tonal languages or those with inflections, go beyond the scope of the Latin alphabet. This means there are no direct letter equivalents for certain sounds, making transliteration challenging.

Imperfect Rules

Transliteration rules can be inconsistent. Sometimes, there may not be a one-size-fits-all solution, and human judgment is required to assess the proper translations.

Context Sensitivity

A single word can be transliterated differently depending on the surrounding text. This requires a sophisticated algorithm that takes context into account.



Smarty's Solution: Transliteration Made Easy

When you're evaluating APIs, make sure the provider offers a "language" parameter that puts you in control of how transliteration is handled. If you're using Smarty's tools, you'll have three options:

Native

This option returns results in the original writing system. For example, Japanese addresses are output using kanji, katakana, and other native scripts.

Latin

Choose this option to convert results to Latin alphabet characters. Japanese addresses are output using Roman letters, making them compatible with systems that only accept Latin characters.

Unspecified

If you prefer to preserve the character set from the input, Smarty's "Unspecified" option is the way to go. Mixed input results in mixed output, ensuring compatibility with various systems.

Specifying transliteration options upfront is pivotal because it ensures that downstream systems receive address data that's compatible and usable.

By eliminating character-set barriers, Smarty empowers businesses to deliver goods and services worldwide without the hindrance of

INTERNATIONAL ADDRESS FORMATS

03



International address formats are a fascinating tapestry of diversity, reflecting the unique customs, conventions, and linguistic nuances of each country. In this chapter, we'll explore how address formats vary widely between nations, each with its own rules and structures.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of international address validation, it's insightful to review the address formats of a few major economies. These examples offer a cross-section of global address verification, showcasing the intricate differences that exist in address formatting practices around the world.

United Kingdom

1. Apartment Number on a Separate Line

In multi-tenant UK addresses, the apartment number is often presented on a separate line, ensuring clarity and ease of identification.

Example:

Apartment 4B
23 Elm Court
Brentwood
CM14 5GF

2. Premise Number Follows Apartment

Following the apartment number, you'll typically find the premise number. This number helps pinpoint the specific building within a complex or on a street.

Example:

Apartment 3
12 Willow Street
Kensington
SW7 1LY

3. Street Name After Premise Number

Once the premise number is established, the street name is provided. This is where the property's location on the street is detailed.

Example:

Apartment 2
47 High Street
Sutton
SM1 1JF

4. Dependent Locality Indicates Neighborhood or District

In some cases, UK addresses include a dependent locality. This component provides additional information about the neighborhood or district within the City or administrative area, further narrowing down the address's location. It should be listed first, followed by the administrative area.

Example:

Flat 5
19 Cherry Avenue
Wembley
Alperton
HA0 4UQ

5. Locality Is the City Name

The locality in a UK address typically refers to the city, town, or administrative area. It's an essential part of the address, ensuring that mail and packages reach the correct urban area.

Example:

Apartment 1A
25 Meadow Lane
Nottingham
NG7 2DA

6. Postal Code Follows City

The postal code, often called the ZIP Code in some countries, is crucial for precise address identification. It comes after the city or locality in a UK address.

Example:

1 Market Street
Edinburgh
EH1 1DE

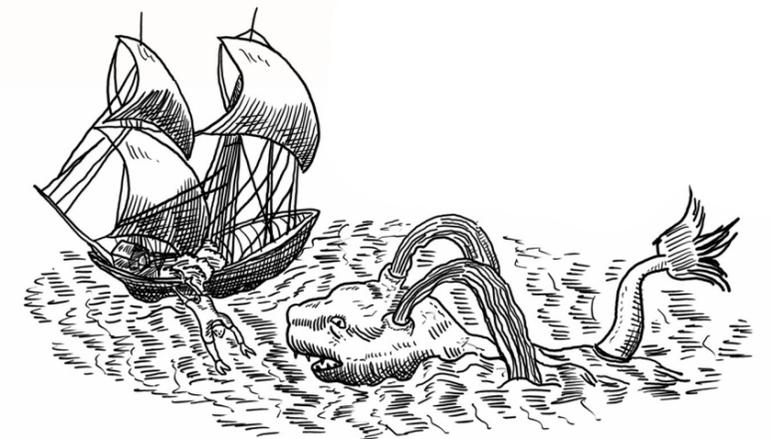
7. Premise Number May Be Omitted if the Building Name Provided

Sometimes, the premise number may be omitted from the address if a building name is provided. This allows for flexibility in address formatting while maintaining accuracy.

Example:

Riverside House
Victoria Quay
Leeds
LS1 4ER

Understanding the intricacies of the UK address structure is vital for anyone involved in address validation, geocoding, or sending mail. By adhering to these conventions, you can ensure your address data is accurate and your correspondence reaches its intended destination seamlessly.



Canada

Understanding Canadian addresses can be a breeze for those accustomed to the US address format as they share many similarities. However, there are a few distinctive elements that make Canadian addresses uniquely Canadian, eh.

Whether you're a data analyst, GIS manager, or someone sending mail to the Great White North, here's what you need to know about Canadian address structure.

1. Secondary Unit Number Comes Before Street Number

In Canadian addresses, one notable departure from the typical US format is the placement of the secondary unit number. While in some US addresses, you may encounter the apartment or unit number preceding the street number, in Canada, it's a standard practice. This means that the secondary unit number, such as an apartment or suite, is placed before the primary street number.

Example:

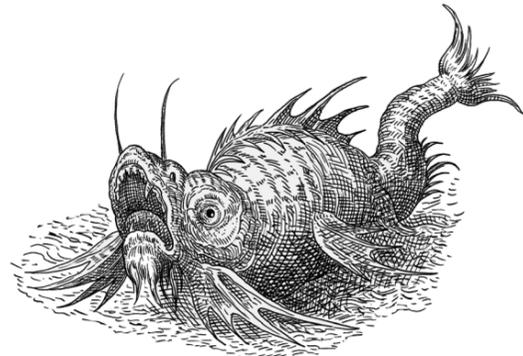
3B-123 Main Street
Toronto, ON M5V 2H1

2. The Resemblance to US Addresses

Besides the difference mentioned above, Canadian addresses closely resemble their US counterparts. You'll find familiar components like the street name, city or locality, and postal code. This similarity simplifies address validation and ensures that the general structure of Canadian addresses is familiar to those well-versed in US address conventions.

Example:

Suite 102
456 Elm Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6E 1R1



3. The Unique Double Space: Province and Postal Code

One intriguing quirk of Canadian addresses is the double space that separates the province or territory from the postal code. While this additional space might seem minor, it's a distinctive feature of Canadian postal standards. Officially, this double space is required by Canada Post, the country's postal authority. It's worth noting that although strict adherence to this spacing might not always be enforced, it's considered best practice.

Example:

Unit 5
789 Maple Street
Calgary, AB T2P 0V7

Whether you're working with Canadian address data for analytical purposes or sending mail to our neighbors to the north, these insights will help you navigate the intricacies of Canadian addresses with confidence.

Japan

Japan also presents an intriguing challenge regarding addressing. In this section, we'll delve into the Latin format, which is more accessible to those who may not speak Japanese, and explain a little about the duality of addresses in Japan.

1. The Dual Format Challenge

Before we dive into the details of Japanese addresses in the Latin format, it's essential to acknowledge the dual nature of Japanese addressing. The native or kanji format is fundamentally different, with components in varying positions. For those who aren't proficient in Japanese, deciphering the kanji format can be a daunting task. However, rest assured that Smarty's international street API is up to the challenge, adeptly formatting addresses in both Latin and native characters, depending on your preference

2. Commas and Hyphens: A Punctuation Love Affair

One striking characteristic of Japanese addresses in the Latin format is the extensive use of punctuation, particularly commas and hyphens. These serve as vital markers that help delineate the various components of an address. Commas are often used to separate address elements, while hyphens can be employed in street names or between numbers to provide clarity.

Example:

3-2-1, Sumida Building, Shimbashi
Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-7121

3. Street Numbers: A Unique Quirk

In Japanese addresses, it's not uncommon to encounter street numbers that substitute for street names. This can be a source of confusion for those unfamiliar with this addressing convention. In such cases, a numeric address alone may leave you wondering about the specific location. However, fear not, for a well-constructed Japanese address, even if it seems cryptic at first glance, will reliably reach its intended recipient.

Example:

1-2-3, Nihon Tower, Ginza
Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0061

Japanese addresses, with their unique blend of punctuation and numeric components, may appear enigmatic to outsiders. However, it's important to emphasize that a well-structured Japanese address, as defined by address validation standards, will successfully reach its destination.

The Latin format of Japanese addresses is a fascinating blend of punctuation, numerics, and occasional street names. While it may seem complex at first, understanding the conventions of this format is essential for professionals working with address data in Japan.



France

France, with its rich history, diverse culture, and culinary delights, is also home to a unique addressing style that combines elements from multiple European conventions. Let's dive into the intricacies of French addresses, highlighting their distinctive features and how they resemble and differ from other European formats, particularly those of Great Britain.

1. Apartment Number on a Separate Line

Much like Great Britain, French addresses feature apartment (or "appartement" in French) numbers on a separate line. This practice ensures clarity and ease of identification, especially in multi-unit buildings or complexes. Placing the apartment number first allows for efficient sorting and delivery.

Example:

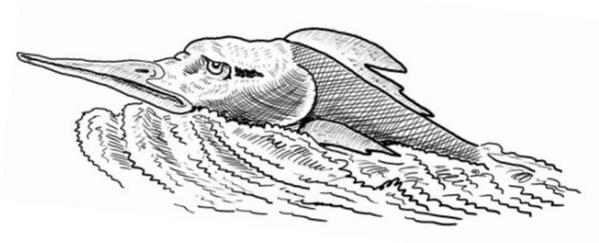
Appartement 2B
23 Rue de la République
Marseille
13002

2. The Building Number Follows the Apartment

France formatting places the building number after the apartment number. This sequence ensures the recipient's location within the building is specified. It's a subtle yet essential distinction that simplifies address interpretation.

Example:

Appartement 3
12
Rue des Fleurs
Paris
75008



3. Resemblance to UK Format

Beyond the arrangement of apartment and building numbers, French addresses closely resemble the format commonly found in the United Kingdom. The street name, locality (city or town), and postal code are consistent with the UK format. This similarity streamlines address validation and ensures that the general structure of French addresses is familiar to those well-versed in UK address conventions.

Example:

Appartement 1A
56
Avenue de la Libération
Lyon
69009

4. Sub-Building Unit Demarcated with Slashes

One notable feature of French addresses is the use of slashes (/) to demarcate sub-building units, such as apartments or suites. This differs from the UK practice of using dashes (-) for the same purpose. Using slashes provides a clear visual separation and allows for precise identification of sub-building units.

Example:

Appartement 4B/2
9
Rue de la Paix
Bordeaux
33000

Understanding the intricacies of French addresses is invaluable for anyone involved in address validation, geocoding, or sending mail to France. By adhering to these conventions, you can ensure that your address data is accurate and that your correspondence and packages reach their intended destination without a hitch.

Australia

Australia, with its stunning landscapes and vibrant cities, boasts an addressing system that's both distinctive and highly efficient. While it shares similarities with the UK format, Australian addresses are characterized by a unique feature: the inclusion of "level type" and "level number" fields.

1. The Concept of Levels

One of the defining features of Australian addresses is the concept of "levels." Levels can refer to floors within a building, but they're not limited to just that. They can encompass various spaces, such as offices, units, or even unique designations like "basement" or "penthouse." This flexibility ensures that Australian addresses can accurately represent various premises.

Example:

Level 3

96-100 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

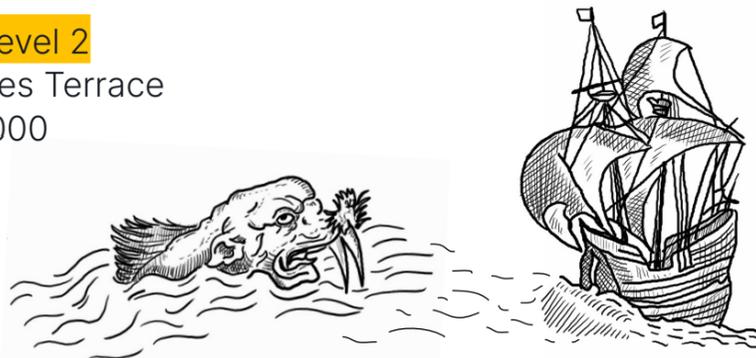
2. Level Type and Level Number

To provide precise information about the level of premises, Australian addresses include both a "level type" and a "level number." The "level type" specifies the kind of space, whether a floor, basement, or any other designation. The "level number" specifies the exact level within that type.

Example:

Basement Level 2

28 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000



3. Sub-Building Units Separated by Slashes

Like the UK format, Australian addresses include sub-building units, such as apartment or suite numbers. However, instead of using dashes, Australians use slashes (/) to separate these units. This subtle difference in punctuation doesn't change the overall position of these components within the address.

Example:

Suite 4/15
33 Queen Street
Sydney NSW 2000

4. A Resemblance to the UK Format

Overall, Australian addresses bear a strong resemblance to the UK format. They share components like the street name, locality (city or town), and postal code in common with UK addresses. This similarity simplifies address validation and ensures that the general structure of Australian addresses is familiar to those well-acquainted with UK address conventions.

Example:

Floor 5
42 King William Street
Adelaide SA 5000

In summary, Australian addresses are a blend of precision and flexibility, thanks to the incorporation of level information. Understanding the nuances of level types and level numbers is essential when working with Australian address data. Whether you're conducting address validation, geocoding, or sending mail to the Land Down Under, these insights will help you navigate Australian addresses with confidence.



At Smarty, we understand the importance of addressing nuances in different countries, and our international street API is designed to handle these variations with precision.

Whether you're requesting French or Japanese address formats, rest assured that we've got you covered so you can focus on efficient global communication.



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POSTAL
CODES

CODES

04

Postal codes, those alphanumeric combinations that play a pivotal role in ensuring mail reaches its intended destination, hold valuable clues about an address's accuracy and location. In this chapter, we'll delve into the fascinating world of postal codes, focusing on two prominent countries in address data traffic: Canada and the UK.

Canada's Meticulous Postal Code Format

Canada is renowned for its meticulous approach to postal code formatting. The Canadian postal code has six characters, following a strict pattern: Character, Numeric, Character, Space, Numeric, Character, Numeric. The space serves as a separator between the three-character segments. Understanding this format is essential for address validation and geocoding accuracy.

Example: A1A 1A1

The Forward Sortation Area (FSA)

The first three characters of a Canadian postal code are known as the Forward Sortation Area (FSA). These characters provide critical information about the location, beginning with 'A' for the East Coast and progressing to 'Y' for the West Coast. Although not all letters between 'A' and 'Y' are used, this sequence helps pinpoint the general region of the address.

The Local Delivery Unit (LDU)

Following the FSA, the next three characters represent the Local Delivery Unit (LDU). The LDU is more specific, indicating a smaller area within the FSA. It can encompass anywhere from zero to 7,000 households, depending on the population density of the region. An address with only the FSA portion often indicates that the address is insufficiently detailed.



The UK's Alphanumeric Complexity

Great Britain's postal codes, while equally informative, exhibit a more diverse alphanumeric structure. A valid British postal code typically consists of five to seven characters, separated by a space. The code comprises two sections: the first section, ranging from two to four characters, signifies a general area and may include country designations such as Ireland or Scotland. The second section, consisting of three characters, delves into specifics, ranging from a neighborhood to a street or building.

Example: N4 4AB

The Importance of Length

A significant factor to consider when dealing with British postal codes is the amount of characters. A valid postal code in Great Britain must have at least six characters (but could still be five), excluding the space. If you encounter a postal code with fewer characters, it's a signal that the address may not be a perfect match. A complete and valid British postal code ensures greater accuracy in address validation.

Beyond Canada and the UK

While we've focused on Canada and Great Britain in this discussion, it's important to note that postal code formats vary worldwide. Some countries exclusively use numeric codes, while others incorporate letters for added specificity. A quality address validation tool should be able to handle these diverse formats, ensuring accurate and reliable address data for users.

Postal codes are more than just strings of characters; they're keys to unlocking precise location information. Understanding the intricacies of postal code formats in different countries should be on the list of requirements when you're vetting international address validation tools. Whether navigating the Canadian FSA and LDU or deciphering the British alphanumeric structure, knowing postal codes empowers you to validate addresses effectively and streamline global communications and deliveries. And Smarty's got you covered.

ANALYZING RESULTS

05



In the world of address data intelligence, precision and accuracy are paramount. Whether you're sending parcels across borders, conducting market research, or optimizing logistics, knowing the quality of your address data is crucial.

In this chapter, we'll explore how to assess the quality of international addresses by examining key fields, address precision codes, and analysis codes.

Understanding Key Fields: Max Geocode Precision and Max Address Precision

When working with international addresses, two important fields provide essential insights into the quality of your results:

Max Geocode Precision

This field indicates the best possible geocode precision you can achieve for a specific country. Geocoding involves converting addresses into geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude) to pinpoint their exact locations. The max geocode precision informs you of the highest level of accuracy you can expect in terms of geographical

Max Address Precision

This field specifies the best possible address precision achievable for a given country. Address precision refers to how detailed and specific an address is. It ranges from broader categories like administrative area (e.g., a region or province) to more granular levels like thoroughfare and premise. We'll dive deeper into this.

Unpacking Address Precision Codes

Address precision codes categorize the level of detail and specificity in an address. These codes help you assess how well an address has been validated and how accurately it represents the location. Here are the common address precision codes:

None

This code indicates that nothing in the address could be verified. It's a sign that the address may be incomplete or erroneous.

Administrative Area

Addresses at this precision level typically identify a broader region, province, or state within a country. It's a step above country-level accuracy.

Locality

This code signifies that the address has been verified down to the city level. While it provides a specific location, it may not be as granular as street-level precision.

Thoroughfare

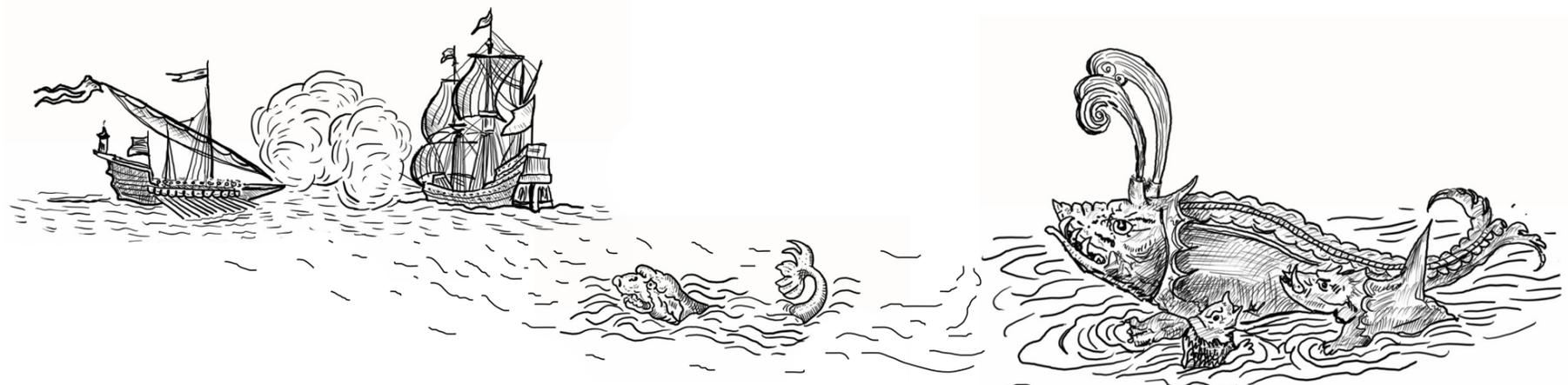
Addresses with this precision code are accurate at the street level. You'll have a precise street name, but it may not specify a particular building or unit.

Premise

Address match is verified to a range of addresses on the specified street.

Delivery Point

At this level, the address is highly accurate, pinpointing the exact location, such as a specific apartment or mailbox. It's the most detailed precision



Deconstructing Analysis Codes

Analysis codes provide insights into how well an address matches your input and whether any adjustments were made. Here are the primary analysis codes:

Added

The “added” code implies that you didn’t include a component in your input, but it was included in the result. It’s like a bonus detail that can enhance your address.

Identified No Change

In this scenario, you specified a component in your input, but it didn’t match the result. While the component in question is identified, no change was suggested, and the component may not be entirely accurate.

Verified No Change

This code indicates that your input exactly matches the output. It’s a sign of a good match and a reliable result.

Verified Large Change

If the input was altered to achieve a match in the output, it falls under this code. While the address was corrected to match, it’s essential to review such changes.

Verified Alias Change

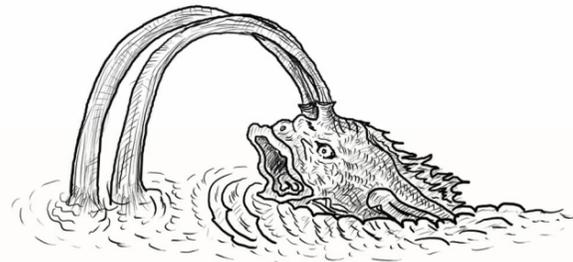
The field has been verified using relevant reference data; an alias change was made during parsing to complete the match.

Applying Precision and Analysis Codes

When analyzing international addresses, consider the max geocode precision and max address precision for the specific country. These fields provide valuable context on the expected accuracy and detail level of your results.

Evaluate the analysis codes to determine how well your input matches the output and whether any adjustments were made. This assessment is crucial for gauging the reliability of your address data.

If the results fall short of your requirements, consider upgrading your validation rules or refining your input to improve accuracy. Address data is a critical asset for various applications, and ensuring its quality is essential for successful outcomes.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

066



As you dive deeper into the world of international address data intelligence and explore the capabilities of address validation, you'll find a wealth of resources and support channels available to help you make the most of your address data solutions.

Here's a list of valuable links and contact information to ensure you have access to expert assistance when needed.

Address Validation Solutions

To experience the power of address validation firsthand, consider trying out these Smarty products:

- » **Single Address Validation:** [Discover the benefits of single address validation](#) and how it can improve the accuracy of individual addresses.
- » **Batch Address Validation:** For larger-scale address validation needs, explore [batch address validation](#) to efficiently process multiple addresses in one go.
- » **Address Validation API:** If you're looking to integrate address validation seamlessly into your applications, check out the [Address Validation API](#) for a robust and scalable solution.

Expert Support Channels

At Smarty, we understand you may have questions or need assistance. Our dedicated support team is here to help.

Here are the various support channels available to you:

- » **Live Chat:** For quick and real-time assistance, visit [smarty.com](#) and click on the chat icon to connect with one of our knowledgeable support agents. They can provide guidance, answer questions, and offer solutions promptly.
- » **Email:** If you prefer written communication, you can contact us via email at support@smarty.com. Describe your inquiry or concern, and our support team will respond with the information you need.

- » **Phone:** Sometimes, a direct conversation is the most effective way to address your queries. Feel free to call our support line at 1-801-877-5778 to speak with a friendly and helpful Smarty representative.

Conclusion

In the ever-expanding global landscape, the accuracy and reliability of address data are more paramount than ever before. Whether you're a business seeking to deliver products and services worldwide or an individual striving for precision in your communications, international address validation is a cornerstone of success. As we conclude this guide, let's reflect on the key takeaways and the path toward clean and trusted address data.

The Need for Flexibility and Vigilance

International address validation isn't a one-size-fits-all endeavor. It requires flexibility to adapt to the diverse formats and conventions of addresses across different countries. Vigilance is essential to ensure that your address data remains up-to-date and accurate. The world is constantly changing, and new addresses emerge while others evolve. Staying informed and proactive is your best defense against inaccuracies.

Embracing Best Practices

Throughout this guide, we've outlined best practices to guide you toward mastering international address validation. From understanding address components and formats to assessing precision and analysis codes, these practices serve as your compass for achieving

Leveraging Tools and Support

In the pursuit of address data excellence, it's essential to leverage the right tools and support. Address validation solutions like those offered by Smarty provide the means to enhance the accuracy of your address data efficiently. Our support channels, including live chat, email, and phone support, are here to assist you every step of the way. Don't hesitate to reach out to Smarty, your address experts, when you need guidance or have questions.

Enabling Growth and Delivering Value

Clean and accurate global address data isn't just a checkbox; it's a catalyst for business growth and customer value. When your address data is reliable, you can expand your operations confidently, target markets effectively, and provide superior customer experiences. Your address data isn't just information; it's a strategic asset that empowers you to achieve your goals.

Free Trial

See for yourself how Smarty [International Address Verification](#) works with a [Free Trial](#).

