

What to look for in an address data solution

(A cheat sheet for address data headache relief)



Verifying, standardizing, and enriching address data improves operations, reduces shipping costs, increases customer satisfaction, and more. A handful of address data solutions offer address validation, autocomplete, enrichment, and geocoding services, but how do you know which is the best choice?

Things to keep in mind:

- 1. Address data needs
- 2. Speed, volume, and reliability
- 3. Data accuracy
- 4. Quality of support
- 5. Ease of implementation

1. Address data needs

Do you need existing addresses in your database to be validated?

Most solutions will offer an address validation and standardization solution for addresses already in your database. For example, Smarty's US and International Address Verification APIs can do this for a single address or in bulk.

Do you need incoming addresses validated upon entry?

Validating addresses already in your database is very important. But if you can prevent bad address data from entering your database in the first place, now you're cookin'. Consider solutions that offer type-ahead address functionality. For example, Smarty's US and International Address Autocomplete seamlessly predicts and populates address form fields as the user types.

Do you need rooftop-accurate geocodes?

Geocodes are the latitude and longitude coordinates of an address. This data is beneficial to those who need to pinpoint the exact physical location of an address; however, some providers who claim rooftop accuracy are only accurate to the ZIP Code or parcel, so if this is something you care about, best keep an eye out. Smarty's geocoding API is about 97% parcel- and rooftop-accurate, assuming the address is real and matchable.

Do you need more key data points than just the address itself?

Cleaning address data is crucial for risk assessment, investment decisions, and eliminating duplicate records. If you require additional data associated with an address, Smarty offers additional data points such as Residential Delivery Indicator (RDI), FIPs code, structure elevation, roof material & type, US Census Block and Tract data, and more. [Try verifying a few addresses](#) or give our [US Property Data](#) a spin to see the available data firsthand.

Do you need international addresses to be validated?

With innumerable formats and unfamiliar spellings, standardizing and validating global address datasets can be a world of pain. If you work regularly with international addresses, consider a solution that validates and standardizes beyond addresses in the United States. For example, Smarty offers verification for addresses in 240+ countries and territories globally.

Do you need to integrate your address data with other systems?

Having a validated, standardized address is essential, but linking data from other sources, like demographics, requires a persistent unique identifier (PUID). Address keys ensure easy identification even if aspects of an address change, facilitating data blending and enhancement. SmartyKey™ exemplifies this approach. For more insights on [SmartyKey™ and address keys in general, check out this article](#).

1. Address data needs (cont.)

Do you need address autocomplete to be location-aware?

Address autocomplete streamlines form filling by predicting addresses based on user location. If reducing the friction from filling out online forms is important to you, consider a solution that offers location-aware address autocomplete suggestions.

Can you easily find and understand their pricing options?

When an address data solution is upfront about how much their products and services cost, you'll be much more informed when making comparisons. Any obscurity of price should raise some red flags. On the other hand, transparent pricing is a sign of trustworthiness and can offer a clear expectation of what you're getting. When evaluating an address data solution, note how easy and quick it is to get a clear quote.



2. Speed, volume, & reliability

Do they process addresses at the speed you need?

Address data solutions vary in processing speed (Smarty averages sub-30 millisecond response time). Your choice depends on your specific needs. Speed might not be critical for tasks like validating a mailing list within a week since it can run in the background. However, for real-time address validation, you should opt for a lightning-fast solution.

Do they process addresses at the volume you need?

Speed should go hand-in-hand with volume. Some address data solutions may not have the capacity to process the volume of addresses you need. So it's important to consider speed and volume together when evaluating solutions. Smarty, for example, processes roughly 2.5B addresses per day. So if it's volume you need, Smarty is well equipped to handle large requests without disruptions in speed or service.

Do they offer unlimited rate plans?

Unlimited rate plans are especially important if you have a large volume of addresses that need to be processed at high speeds. If the need arises to push the limits of the number of addresses that can be processed without losing speed or quality, be sure the solution can do the job.

Do they have a history of frequent system downtime?

Any form of downtime (intentional or unintentional) means disruptions in service for you and your business. Some address data solutions maintain consistent uptime. Others, not so much. At Smarty, we pride ourselves on a history of 99.999% uptime. Solutions will typically have a server status page that keeps a history of outages. We suggest researching this before making any final decisions on a solution. You can find [Smarty's status page here](#).



3. Data accuracy

Are they transparent about their match success rate?

No address data solution is 100% accurate (we would be cautious about any claiming to be). For example, Smarty's geocoding API will tell you whether a delivery point is accurate to the parcel, rooftop, ZIP-9, etc. Knowing how accurate your address data is can help you make the best strategic business decisions. If a solution isn't transparent about its data accuracy, it should raise some serious concerns.

Are they transparent about non-match addresses?

Some address data solutions will validate an address that doesn't exist. A validated address that isn't real is called a [false positive](#). When researching solutions, it's important to understand what they do with non-match addresses. Do they notify you that the addresses you're attempting to verify aren't real and disclose the specific parts of the address that are problematic, or do they just come back with a "valid" result anyway?

Do they offer secondary address data?

Secondary address data includes units, suites, room numbers, etc. These details improve data accuracy and delivery, mainly when a single structure contains multiple separate addresses. If such a level of detail is important to your business, ensure the solution you choose validates information to the secondary address level.

Do they verify beyond USPS data?

In the United States, over 20 million non-postal addresses are not included in the USPS database. Despite this, people live and work at these locations and can receive deliveries. Typically, the post office delivers to a PO box instead of the physical address for cost-effective mail delivery to remote areas. To ensure comprehensive coverage, consider an address data solution that verifies beyond USPS data, preventing any delivery point from being overlooked.

Are they CASS-certified?

CASS is the USPS Coding Accuracy Support System. A business that is CASS-certified has passed USPS quality control for standardizing and validating addresses. This means that you can trust that business to meet USPS's standards of accuracy, so it's best to make sure the address data solutions you're considering meet this criteria.



4. Quality of support

Do they make it easy to get a hold of a real person?

Some challenges are more easily and quickly handled by a real person. However, not all solutions offer live technical support, and often, those that do offer it still don't make it easy to contact them. If easy access to live technical support is important to you, consider an address data solution that offers it.

Do they respond to and solve support questions promptly?

Researching response time is crucial when selecting an address data solution. At Smarty, we prioritize quick responses: chats within 10 seconds, emails within an hour, and phone calls answered before the third ring, all by a real person. Our support team is located at our headquarters, feet from our dev team, ensuring quick responses to even the most technical questions.

Do they offer various ways of contacting support?

Whether by chat, email, phone, smoke signal, etc., consider an address data solution that offers a way to contact their support team that matches your communication preference.

Do they offer free support?

Some address data solutions charge for customer support or start charging after a certain threshold has been met. Some don't charge at all. Smarty, for example, offers free unlimited customer support during the normal business hours of 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. MST, Monday through Friday. That said, we also offer a paid option for those who want to reach support outside of work hours. When considering solutions, be sure to account for customer support costs (or lack thereof).

Do they offer after-hours support?

Some challenges can't wait until Monday, and some are so urgent they can't wait until tomorrow. When such challenges arise, it's reassuring to know you have a customer support team ready to assist at all times (even after work). So if it's critical to your business, consider an address data solution that offers after-hours support.

Would you let your sister date them?

Some customer service is so good you want them to be part of the family. Like this raving fan once said about Smarty's support team:



Excellent customer service! 10/10!
I would let them date my sister.

Mike W.
HIPPA Software Architect

5. Ease of implementation

Is their documentation accessible and easy to follow?

Setting up a new API is much smoother and faster when the documentation is clear, easy to follow, and accessible. You'll be left feeling frustrated when it's difficult to find, hard to navigate, or has outdated examples and an overabundance of technical jargon. So be sure to have your developers check it out before you make a decision.

Do they have SDKs to help you implement more quickly?

An SDK, or Software Development Kit, provides developers with all the tools, code, documentation, etc., to help them set up an API in the programming language they use to create software. Smarty, for example, provides [SDKs](#) in 10 programming languages with loads of examples and sample code to make things easy. When considering an address data solution, have your developers check out their SDKs.

Can you get expert implementation help?

Setting up an API can be frustrating when you encounter setbacks or daunting when you have no clue what you're doing. In such instances, it's nice to know at the outset that you can access a support team. When evaluating address data solutions, consider those that offer expert implementation help so you can be set up for success from the get-go.

Can they help you migrate from on-premise to the cloud?

Whether you need an on-premise or cloud-based solution, having the option to switch from one to the other can save you a lot of headaches. When evaluating address data solutions, consider whether they can help you easily migrate between the two.

Do they make demoing their software easy?

Understanding how to use a product before purchasing it is essential. Demos facilitate this, but not all address data solutions offer accessible testing options. At Smarty, we provide [online demos](#) without the need to engage with a sales rep or share personal information. Additionally, we offer comprehensive testing, including running a challenge set of addresses. Regardless of your choice, ensure you thoroughly test the product before committing to it.





Selecting the best address data solution requires careful consideration. Take your time to assess your options thoroughly and use this guide to make the choice that aligns with your organization's needs.

If Smarty is one of the solutions you're considering, [sign up for a free trial](#) to give products like US Address Verification and US Address Autocomplete a spin.

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