Cleansing
Matching
Enrichment

Data Quality from the Cloud: The User's Advantages in Focus

We write emails, administer contacts and participate in social media platforms; and by doing so we produce enormous amounts of data – every day. For effective data quality management it is absolutely essential to keep this flood of data under control and to make the best possible use of the information it contains. Until recently this was only possible with an on-premises software solution. Although data quality solutions according to traditional license models are often too mighty for many company requirements, they are still purchased and implemented; or they are simply too expensive and many companies are deprived of useful services. The alternative: Data Quality Services from the Cloud.

The Core Value of the Cloud

In a perfect situation, an application from the cloud provides exactly what is needed; not more and not less, mostly fast, uncomplicated and economical. Although pure financial considerations play a role, improvements in efficiency and user orientation in particular also play an important role in many demand scenarios as well. A stronger focus on the user and immediate availability of functions both form the core of the cloud idea. Of course, it's also a matter of background technology, intuitive controls, cloud service architecture, performance and server networking, as well as data security and maximum reduction of risk.

But what really makes the cloud so attractive is the opportunity of using an application just when required. Only the resources actually needed are paid for, and only for as long as they are used. In many fields today the cloud has become a genuine alternative to more traditional on-premises solutions.

Data Quality from the Cloud

Data quality services are also available as an on-demand solution from the cloud, either as software as a service (SaaS) or as a cleverly implemented Web service operating unobtrusively in the background. And what use does it serve? It pro- vides tailor-made solutions for branch-specific or individual company needs – at best designed by the company itself.

On Demand: Data Quality On Call

A company takes over a competitor, several subsidiaries are fused together, or two entirely independent branches of a company are merged as part of consolidation measures. In most cases such merger and acquisition (M&A) processes usually means that all data from each of the parties involved must be integrated. For businesses with a modest

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and stabile customer/supplier base, data quality improvement measures are usually not available. The newly created company structure soon makes it clear that much customer and supplier data now exists several times in the system, probably also in different formats and with different attributes. The time is due for data cleansing and consolidation to take place. However, the company customer and supplier structure means that it does not plan to implement any further DQ initiatives once the current optimization initiative has been completed. Licensing and permanent installation of a data quality solution is therefore ruled out; its costs are unnecessary and it requires extra work. Up until now the solution for this problem has mostly been that one or more employees have been seconded to manually update the data.

The smart alternative today is: innovative cloud technology.

In a secure process data is simply and comfortably loaded to the portal of a data quality service provider via a Web browser. There it is cleansed and consolidated in the providers' own computer center. Customer addresses can also be compared to current address change (house moving) data

and obituary notices, or supplemented with new telephone numbers and geo data. In addition to individual data gathering and optimizing (comparable with batch processing by traditional on-premises solutions), interactive ad-hoc cleansing of individual address data is possible using cloud services, and well worth doing. For example, when arranging a limited, higher value mailing action; or when frequent alterations are made to customer main data and correct addresses must still be accessible in real time. For as long as the data quantity does not exceed a given volume, a locally installed data quality software solution is not really worthwhile. On the contrary, the resources available do not bear any relationship to the uses derived, not even when the number of individual datasets to be optimized increases – in this case, permanent integration of data quality Web services into the existing data management system is the better solution.

Address data can be optimized at any time even without a Web browser, but still using the cloud. Important here is the wide-ranging experience of the supplier to ensure that appropriate interfaces are available.
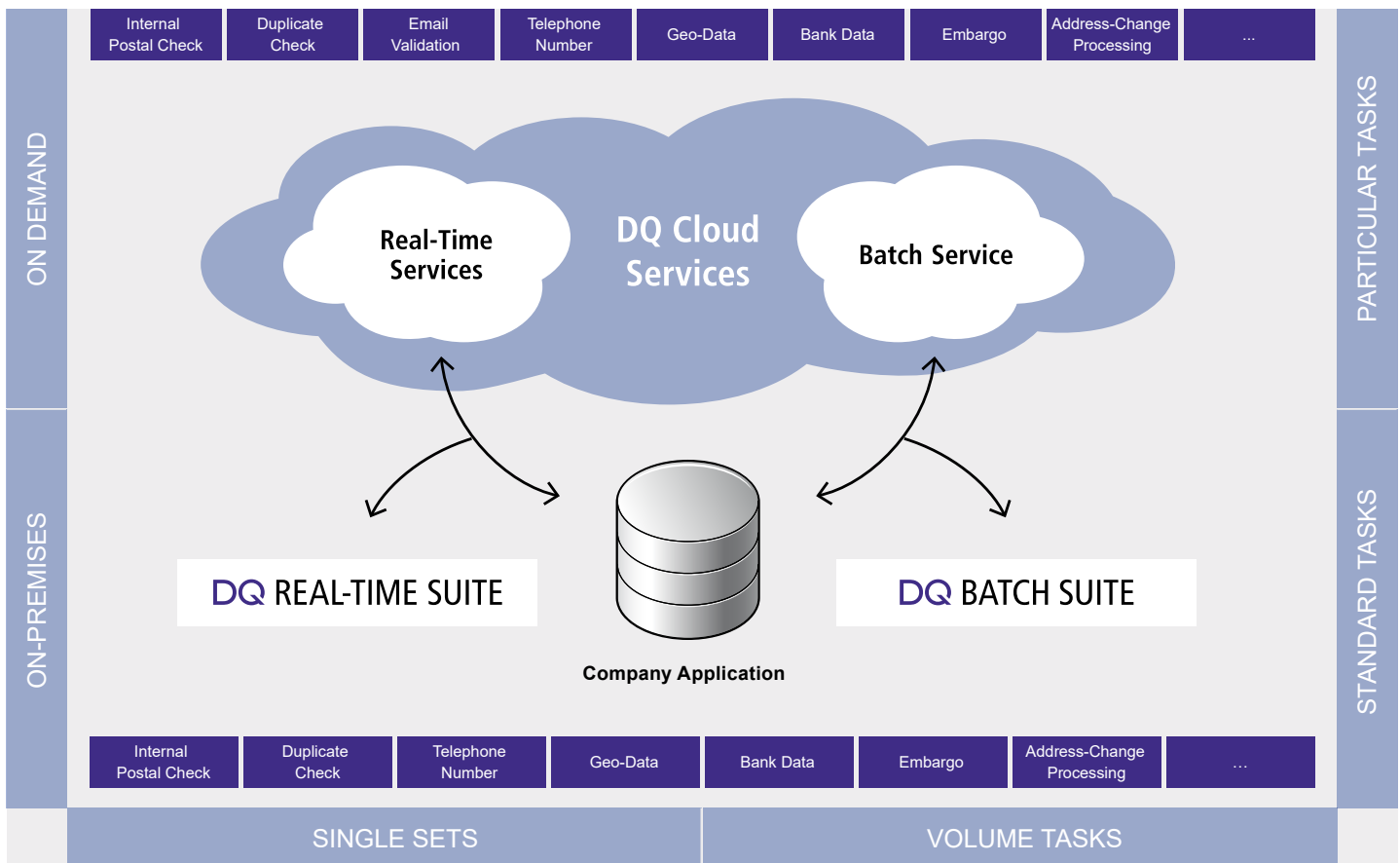
The hybrid model. A combination of installed software and data quality on-demand.

Web-based data quality services are suitable for both ad- hoc optimizing of individual datasets – over a Web browser or as an interactive Web service running in the background–as well as for periodic cleansing of larger data volumes. The workload should not exceed the limit individually set by the user.

The hybrid Model: Intelligent Linking

Integration of Web services into business applications using connectors and interfaces also enables a further usage model in cloud computing: the hybrid model.

The combination of installed software and data quality on demand fills a particular void in service. Volume tasks are dealt with by installed software and the cloud is used for special tasks or ad-hoc cleansing. This could be the case for an online dealer with mainly German customers who is already using a DQ solution for optimal address data, but at the same time has increasing numbers of customers from neighboring countries. The expected turnover and profit from these few hundred extra international customers does not justify the cost of adding further licensed databanks for addresses. The intelligent and flexible alternative is to add the needed functions as on-demand services. These supplement existing functions, but the charges incurred are based solely on their actual use. A similar solution could be used for data enrichment. According to customer needs, traditional installation solutions should be combinable with the two on- demand approaches – batch processing and real-time service.

From the User's perspective

Data quality services from the cloud (as well as many other cloud services) are mostly less comprehensive than their more traditional counterparts and are clearly more standardized. But this higher level of standardization has a decisive advantage when compared to locally installed soft- ware products: cloud services can be used immediately and without prior training. Data cleansing, data matching and data enrichment functions are available in the same way as an installed solution.

Cloud services can be used from any workplace having an internet access. Permanent availability and minimal integration effort are enhanced by simple operation. Data quality cloud services are a lean and intelligent solution for dealing with a multitude of different data quality initiatives. A hybrid solution is often the perfect solution because it can upgrade the cost effectiveness of installed solutions and also covers almost all scenarios. Regular customers can make the change from local to cloud services without interrupting any working processes.

Users should pay attention to simple operation. The browser application's user interface must conform to Web 2.0 and intuitively integrate its functions. This saves effort by considerably reducing the time needed to become familiarized. It is important that each individual application can be started and managed from within the browser application and that all processes have accompanying step-by-step instructions. All running processes, costs incurred to date and details of booked quotas must be clearly visible. With this possible, company employees are in the best position to use cloud solutions productively and fast.

The general rule is that data quality on-demand is the more profitable solution when a license is not (yet) economically viable. The transaction-related cost model provides a wide margin of calculatory safety. Only the specific resources actually used are paid for. This means that data quality optimization is feasible for any amount of data and every task.

Security

An important final point: Because data quality applications in the cloud must process personal data, the level of security must be very high. The architecture of the portal and Web service should enable SSL-encoded HTTPS communication. Data in processing must be protected against unauthorized access by a multi-level firewall-based security system. Finally, the computer center itself (which hosts the cloud services) must be certified by prevailing security standards.

Anchor Software Solutions Overview

Anchor Software LLC was established in 2000 to provide comprehensive software solutions for direct mail, direct marketing, data quality, and other related applications. Anchor Software prides itself in delivering comprehensive, products and services designed to meet the needs of our customers that allows them to stay in the forefront of dynamic and highly competitive marketplaces. Anchor's product line includes 60 separate solutions, with over 2000 products installed.

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- **USPS NCOALink® Certified Interface Solution**
- **PAVE™ Gold (Presort) Certified Solution**
- **Intelligent Mail® Barcode (IMb) Solutions**
- **International Address and Data Quality**

Enterprise-Level Data Quality

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- **Real-Time Address Validation**
- **De-Duplicate Files**
- **Enhance Addresses**
- **Deceased/Prison Suppression**
- **GeoCoding**

Document Design

- **High-Speed Printing and Document Preparation**
- **Transactional Document Design**

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Anchor Software offers 24/7 customer support and you will always get a live person. Not only will we assist in solving software issues but we will also help with the use of our software!