



Data Quality: Why Should You Care?

by Frank Dravis

How can data quality affect you or your organization? Here are some examples:

Example 1: In a white paper submitted to MIT's IQ (Information Quality) 2000 conference, the United Health Group reported: "Internal queries revealed more than 1000 members who were 1000 years old. This data was used to understand differing health care needs by age and to provide special services to senior citizens."

Example 2: In 1997, data quality problems cost Oxford Health Plans, Inc., \$69.3 million. In addition, its stock dropped 62%, and the New York Insurance Department fined Oxford \$3 million.

Example 3: A New Jersey man admitted in November 1999 to circumventing computer fraud detection programs at two music-by-mail clubs. He used 1630 aliases to buy CDs at special introductory rates, which he subsequently sold at flea markets at a 400-percent markup. Some of the culprit's methods included adding fictitious apartment numbers, unneeded direction abbreviations and extra punctuation marks in his names and addresses. By exploiting the companies' inability to filter out bad data, he was able to bilk them for more than \$250,000.

These examples offer vivid illustration that data quality, good or bad, has a direct and substantial impact on your business. Data quality knows no bounds; it transcends every human occupation, organization or enterprise. The importance of data quality, emerging into information quality, has been growing in proportion to society's evolution from the industrial age to the information age. After all, in this age, what is information if you cannot trust it?

The point is that *physical assets are increasingly becoming less important in determining the success and valuation of companies.* Instead, intellectual capital, including the value of information and knowledge assets, is becoming the critical determinant of perceived worth of future profitability.

IEEE Section Meeting

Frank Dravis, Firstlogic Inc.

Data Quality

Monday, February 19, 6:30 pm
Mayo Medical Sciences Building
(321 3rd Avenue SW, Rochester)

☞ Pizza & socializing at 6:30 pm ☜

Frank Dravis will describe how data is the fundamental building block of information, through which knowledge is gained, and how from knowledge intelligence is enabled. It all starts with data.

At the presentation we will:

- Discuss additional examples of good bad data quality.
- Gain greater understanding of data types and information quality problems.
- Learn about the 15 dimensions of information quality.
- Explore the evolution of information quality.

Mr. Dravis will also discuss tips for improving your information quality through the successful launch of a pilot program.

Frank Dravis is the vice president of Information Quality, Research and Practice at Firstlogic, Inc. He has 16 years experience in Information Technology and software development. At Firstlogic he has served in a number of positions, including senior software engineer, manager of advanced software development and vice president of Development. In his current position he is responsible for identifying and pursuing strategic information quality opportunities for Firstlogic, in terms of both external markets and internal practices.

An honors graduate of National University, San Diego, Frank Dravis has a bachelor's degree in Computer Science. He is an MBA candidate at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

Erratum

The following attributions were omitted from the article, *Data Quality: Why Should You Care?*, published in the February 2001 newsletter:

1) Kahn, B., et al, *How to Get an Information Quality Program Started: The Ingenix Approach*, 2000 MIT Conference on Information Quality; 2) Wall Street Journal, 12/4/97; 3) Loshin, D., *Payback*, Intelligent Enterprise, 8/18/00; 4) Turner, N., and Hodges, J., *The Drive to High IQ in British Telecommunications plc (BT); Deploying Information Quality Tools in a Federated Business*, 2000 MIT Conference on Information Quality. This information was provided by Frank Dravis.



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