



## Understanding postal geography

### The power of the postcode

While not exactly the stuff of dinner party conversation (unless you are at that lifestage dominated by discussion of school catchment areas), postal geography can be a valuable source of information for the arts marketer.

A postcode is useful for identifying the location of your audiences, the distance they have travelled to your venue, it can offer in-depth insight into their income, family unit, preferred holidays destination and propensity to own a caravan. As well as this vast bank of customer information a simple postcode can also ensure that your direct mail reaches them, perhaps even with cost savings using something like Royal Mail's Mailsort.

#### POSTCODES: SOME FACTS

There are currently 120 Postcode Areas in Britain (such as CV), 8,820 Postcode Sectors (such as CV34 4) and 1.4 million individual postcodes covering an average of 15 households each

Whole Postcode:

CV34 4TR

Breaks down into:

Postal Sector	CV34 4
Postal District	CV34
Postal Area	CV

CV	34	4	TR
The first one or two letters is the postcode area and it identifies the main Royal Mail sorting office which will process the mail.	The second part is usually just one or two numbers but for some parts of London it can be a number and a letter. This is the postcode district and tells the sorting office which delivery office the mail should go to.	This third part is the sector and is usually just one number. This tells the delivery office which local area or neighbourhood the mail should go to.	The final part of the postcode is the unit code which is always two letters. This identifies a group of up to 80 addresses and tells the delivery office which postal route (or walk) will deliver the item.

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Postcode information is vital to using demographic information. Coding customer databases with sophisticated lifestyle information can help to understand and segment audiences, target appropriate sponsorship partners, identify likely donors for individual giving as well as feed into other marketing decisions such as product and pricing.

Using additional geo-demographic data it's possible to measure how many people are attending against the potential market available thus identifying how well your organisation is performing.

It is also possible to acquire names and addresses of new 'hot' prospects, based on the profile of your existing audiences – all ascertained from their postcodes.

Mapping of existing audiences according to their postal sector can help with distribution planning, perhaps by concentrating on postal sectors where few audience members currently live.

Postcodes are also used by funders or local authorities to define priority areas and by the arts marketer to evaluate how that priority area has been serviced.

The range of uses highlights the importance of a postcode. Without excellent data capture at the box office (and / or regular data cleaning) all the marketing opportunities presented in a simple postcode are lost.