

Battle Against Mortality Fraud Intensifies

Submitted by: Tracesmart Ltd

Friday, 26 June 2009

In order to offer their customers increased protection against impersonation of the deceased (IOD) fraud, Tracesmart have considerably increased the coverage of mortality data they hold. The consumer data specialists have now incorporated the General Register Office (GRO) death indexes for England and Wales from 1980-1983 into their Tracesmart Corporate (<http://www.tracesmartcorporate.co.uk/>) suite of services; this being only the beginning of their comprehensive death index digitisation project.

The GRO has collated registers of important civil events, such as births, deaths and marriages, since 1837, but it was not until 1984 that they began to digitise records. All registrations prior to 1984 are held on microfiche. In 2005 the GRO initiated the 'Digitisation of Vital Events' (DOVE) project to digitise the birth, death and marriage indexes, but unfortunately following major delays the project was put on hold, with only birth records up to 1934 and death records up to 1957 having been digitised; it is not known when the project will recommence.

Death index (<http://www.tracesmartcorporate.co.uk/death-index/>) data is a pivotal tool in the fight against IOD fraud. With a lack of historical death data available electronically and having acquired microfiches holding all deaths registered in England and Wales covering 1960 – 1983, Tracesmart embarked on a comprehensive death index digitisation project. Utilising an offshore service provider, the company are ensuring 99.95% accuracy on all records digitised through a strict quality control procedure and, when completed in 2010, the project will yield approximately 14,500,000 death records in a digital format.

Tracesmart have completed the initial stage of this project and the 1980 – 1983 death indexes (some 2,500,000 records) have already been integrated into their mortality database. These additions make it both the most comprehensive and extensive commercially available mortality database in the UK.

Whilst the 1980 – 1983 death indexes will be essential for conducting comprehensive Identity Checks (<http://www.tracesmartcorporate.co.uk/identity-checks/>) and data cleansing (<http://www.tracesmartcorporate.co.uk/data-cleansing/>) exercises, they will also play a significant role when financial institutions wish to trace people (<http://www.tracesmartcorporate.co.uk/trace-people/>) as part of an asset reunification program. From their considerable experience in tracing dormant account holders, Tracesmart know that many of the missing individuals will transpire to have died prior to 1984. Whereas to identify such events previously involved labour intensive research, it can now be done at the click of a button.

Commenting on how the new death records and their ongoing digitisation project will help their customers Mike Trezise, Managing Director of Tracesmart, noted,

"Following on from the integration of death registration information into our anti-fraud services last year, we are continuing to enhance our mortality database. From a service standpoint this data means we can improve and enhance much of our portfolio, especially our identity verification and mortality screening services. This, in turn, allows our clients to better defend against mortality related fraud, protecting both the company and consumer alike."