

Fact Sheet – Account Attributes

A carefully thought-out Account structure is the key to effective revenue management information. While the Account is itself a business object, with its own numbering rules and attributes, it also draws on other stand alone business objects such as the address or parcel of land and customer names, also known as Contacts.

Three attributes belong to the Account alone – the Account number, the Account type and the industry code. Account numbering in IT theory should contain no “intelligence”. However effective Account management sometimes requires elements such as an Account number with suffix style, so that the number remains constant but first, second, third and so on customer at this address has their own numeric suffix which increments automatically as each new customer moves in to the address. The base Account number itself may come from a stored number sequence, with new Accounts taking the next number, or may be seeded from another source such as the development application number for the land. One mistake some utilities make is to have the meter reading route number embedded in the Account number. This does not make for flexible solutions and modern utility billing applications should be able to show an Account's route details without embedding the data in the number.

Account type is not always used. It is important where multiple Accounts exist at the same address, with each responsible for paying for different items pertinent to the address. The most common of these is the “owner” Account and the “Tenant” Account. Both types should be able to exist at the same time, and independent of each other, if the billing rules allow for such a distinction.

Finally the Industry Code should be an Account attribute. These are generally known as Standard Industry Codes (SIC) and each country publishes their own standard list. A SIC Table would form part of the default data within the billing application. Only residential Accounts would not hold a SIC attribute. Many users apply differential billing rules based on SIC.