ARGE Neue Medien

International data quality guideline 2.0

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Preface

ARGE Neue Medien is an association of more than 100 renowned manufacturers in the sanitary, heating and air conditioning sector.
The object of ARGE is to advise its members and their market partners in the fields of new media and electronic business and to introduce, maintain and expand new information and communication technologies at both national and international level by way of support.
To ensure the combined smooth operation of the deployed technologies across all stages of the marketing and distribution process, it is necessary for the article master data intended for the market to comply with a good, uniform standard of data quality.

Article master data form the basis for price lists, shop links, processes (EDI[1]), logistics and planning. Each of these areas entails specific requirements regarding the content of the data. For this reason, ARGE Neue Medien has analysed the data quality requirements and evolved the Data Quality Guideline (DQG). The focus here is on new developments in the area of article master data and the attendant quality requirements for the market as a whole. The DQG specifies the data contents and defines the data requirements to ensure uniform processes.
For this purpose it is recommendable to prepare current and complete article master data, where applicable also for various product ranges. All changes to a stock of articles, in particular with regard to new articles or price changes, should thus be provided in good time. The following data content items are specified in the DQG:

- Identification (Catalogue level)
- Prices
- Texts
- Groups
- Logistics
- Image data
- Documents
- Attributes

Mandatory content items and conditional mandatory content items within supplied article data provide the basis for processing of the data. Mandatory items are manufacturer's details, article number, short texts, validity, groups and prices. Beyond this, data content items which additionally improve the quality of the data can also be provided, such as long texts or dimension texts. ARGE recommends supplying all texts in the respective national language. It is recommended to provide logistical information and attributes, as this will also upgrade the data quality.

The data content items enumerated above are first of all described in general terms. Three annexes are additionally attached to this document, presenting the data content items and explaining the data quality

[1] Electronic Data Interchange - EDI - defines a data processing concept which operates independently of communication protocols and transmission media. Organisations can exchange electronic documents with other organisations, provided that they support the same EDI standards.

requirements. In this way, we arrive at a detailed compilation of all the requirements pertaining to good data quality.

The DQG provides the basis for the provision of brand manufacturers' master data for their market partners via the international SYNOMAX platform developed by ARGE Neue Medien (www.synomax.com). Prior to publication of the data, they are checked by reference to the data quality standards as defined by the DQG and converted into the customary market formats.

Notes

The version numbers of the documents may differ, as possible changes must not necessarily affect the documents as a whole. Country-specific annexes will be possible in future. Following the release of a new version, suggestions for changes and further developments are first of all compiled in a white paper for each document and a subsequent version is duly generated on the basis of this information. These white papers are managed as documents in their own right and can be requested at any time.

Items of information which are categorised in the *Annex Data Quality Requirements* as optional are subject to further prioritisation. This means that certain content items enhance the quality of the data substantially more than others. The recommendations on the provision of the content items are to be found in the column Comments/Information.

Annexes

International Data Quality Guideline - Annex Definition of Data Content

International Data Quality Guideline - Annex Code Lists

International Data Quality Guideline - Annex Data Quality Requirements

Interface description

International Data Quality Guideline - description csv_excel-interface

Fundamental information on master data quality

Identification (Catalogue level)

The information at catalogue level serves to enable supplier- and catalogue-specific identification of the supplied data. The term *identification* denotes clear allocation of a catalogue to the manufacturer and clear allocation of the article to the manufacturer's catalogue. A manufacturer may specify several catalogues which divide its overall range into sub-ranges. Division into product areas, brands or products and replacement parts is conceivable, for example. Overarching documents can be assigned to the delivery of data at catalogue level.

Prices

Individual prices are not provided via the industry systems. They serve solely as a basis for calculations. Individual price details are agreed and exchanged solely in bilateral business relations.

The valid list price for the current price list or a *price on inquiry* is to be specified for each article. A *recommended retail price (RRP)* can additionally be submitted for each article as information for the end customer.

In justified cases, *price on inquiry* may be specified together with defined attributes. This applies in case of customised production, for example.

Article texts

A distinction is made between four different types of texts when preparing article master data:

- Short texts
- Product specific texts
- Long texts
- Specification data

Short texts

The short text is required to describe and thus to identify an article. This applies not only to initial processing in the manufacturer's own system, but also and above all to further use of the short text in the downstream business process and transfer to other systems. The focus should thus be on drafting the short text such that it can be adopted directly into a market partner's inventory control system in its original form and without requiring any revision. In the next step, the market partner can use the short texts for its customers, who can ultimately use the texts for the end customers, e.g. for offers or invoices.

The short text should therefore provide a clear and comprehensible description of the article. This means that content such as marketing aspects does not belong in a short text. Duplicate text should be avoided in particular for products and replacement parts. In order to avoid any ambiguity, in the case of spare parts the article number may thus be used in the short text.

The recommendations and rules applying to the composition of short texts are documented in the corresponding annexes.

Long texts and product specific texts

Long texts serve to describe a product or a group of similar products in detail. Dimension texts relate to the specific design and describe technical details or special product features, for example.

Specification data

Specification data represents a combination of short text, long text and product specific text. Specification data serve to initiate business relations; bills of quantities may be produced on the basis of this data, for example. Consequently, the texts should be unambiguous and limited to the key information on the article concerned.

Groups

The classification and designation of groups are based on the product range concerned and are unambiguous. All articles are allocated to a commodity group and a product group, each of which has its own designation.
A commodity group allocates the article to a particular manufacturer-specific group in the context of its usage (e.g. radiator, valve). The product group allocates the article to a manufacturer-specific group according to market-specific aspects. These may, for example, be a brand or range name.
The further allocation of an article to a discount or bonus group enables it to be classified and defined with regard to certain terms and conditions. The manufacturers themselves are responsible for communicating the precise figures involved in terms and conditions.

Logistics

Article master data are required for order processing and invoicing, as well as for inventory control, materials management and transport purposes. Smooth business processes can only be ensured when these data are up to date, free of errors and complete at all times. This is particularly important in the area of logistics, where the ideal storage bin allocations and route management are based on specified gross dimensions, for example. Consequently, logistical data on articles and replacement parts form an essential component of a complete data record. The minimum specifications required for each article are the packaging dimensions and weights.

Image data

An image should be assigned to all articles and replacement parts of a product range. It is recommendable to provide article images in both web quality and print quality. Images in web quality and web format are used in shop systems, for example. Print quality is used in producing catalogues, brochures or advertisements, for example.

Images are of particular importance to market partners when new articles are involved. Images or line drawings (possibly of substitute products) provide the market partners with important guidance with

regard to replacement parts and accessories for newly defined articles. In the case of spare parts it is sufficient for these items to be included in an exploded view drawing.

Documents

In addition to images, media data also include supplementary documents. These are of special importance to the market partners, e.g. in connection with installation or maintenance. Assembly and maintenance instructions thus represent valuable additional information in electronic systems. Such instructions may be provided in PDF documents or videos, for example.

Image data and *documents* are referred to jointly as ‘media data’ in the further documentation.

Attributes

Each article is different and possesses individual properties. Attributes can be provided in order to unambiguously identify an article or to describe it in detail, e.g. in price lists, online systems, inventory control systems, catalogues or shop systems.
The products can also be classified according to the ETIM classification model (electro-technical information model) with the option of using the attributes. Further information is to be found in the *Annex Definition of Data Content* or at the internet site www.etim-international.com