

United States Postal Service

Quarterly Performance for Periodicals Service Variance

Overview

In FY09, service performance for Periodicals is being measured through combining data from two externally and independently operated Periodicals measurement systems. The Red Tag Monitoring Service is operated by the not-for-profit Red Tag News Publications Association to monitor service for association members; the Del-Trak System is operated by Time, Inc. to monitor service for several of its publications. When combined, data from the two systems represent 46 publications ranging in frequency from daily to monthly, concentrated primarily in weekly publications. Circulation for the publications in the systems ranged from 1,600 to nearly 4 million.

Service is measured end-to-end using mailer-reported entry times to start-the-clock and external reporter delivery dates. Testing encompasses 559 3-Digit ZIP Code areas, representing approximately 85% of periodical volume destinations. The systems include destination entry mail, entered largely at destination SCF or ADC, as well as end-to-end mail, in similar proportion to national Periodicals volumes.

The transit time for each of the tested publications is compared against the USPS service standards for Periodicals. Data from the two external systems have been reviewed, combined, and weighted by an independent contractor. Due to the limited number of seeded pieces, data are only statistically valid for the desired precision at a postal administrative area level.

Limitations

Many aspects of these system designs are based upon publisher needs, and were not designed to develop a statistically valid representation of national USPS service performance. As a result, there may be factors influencing service performance that are not adequately represented by the available data. For example, there is virtually no inclusion of destination delivery unit entered or in-county Periodicals in the system. There is limited data for publication frequencies other than weekly. Only flats-shaped Periodicals are currently measured. While the proportion of destination and end-to-end volumes being tested are similar to national Periodicals mail volumes, distributions of the tested volumes at the postal district and area levels may not be representative of actual volumes. Finally, testing does not cover origination of mailings from all ZIP Code areas - in Quarter 1, testing covered 559 out of the approximately 891 ZIP Code areas to which virtually all of the Periodicals volume destinates.

For Periodicals, the start-the-clock event occurs when the mail is accepted by the Postal Service. In Quarter 1, systems were not fully in place to capture and validate that hand-off event. The start-the-clock information provided by the mailers was validated against another source for only 30 percent of the data, primarily coming from the Del-Trak system.

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Service Variance**

Mail Delivered Between 10/01/2008 and 12/31/2008

Area	Within +1-Day	Within +2-Days	Within +3-Days
Capital Metro Area	86.6%	91.4%	94.1%
Eastern Area	89.6%	93.8%	96.1%
Great Lakes Area	83.0%	89.8%	92.9%
New York Metro Area	90.0%	94.4%	96.7%
Northeast Area	88.0%	92.6%	94.7%
Pacific Area	83.3%	91.1%	94.1%
Southeast Area	78.8%	85.3%	89.5%
Southwest Area	84.4%	90.3%	93.9%
Western Area	89.3%	94.4%	96.6%
Nation	85.7%	91.4%	94.2%