How to Set Up Variable Data

The data file that you will use for Variable Data Printing is critical to the success of your project. Your database might be anything from a simple mailing list to a full-blown personalized mailing. The age old adage that you can never have too much information is definitely applicable here. Data can always be omitted, but is very hard to remanufacture.

Acceptable formats are:
- Excel spreadsheets (.xls, .xlsx)
- Comma separated (.csv) files

In a mailing file, the minimum required fields are:
(These must each be in a separate field within your data file.)

- Name
- Address
- City
- State
- Zip code

The data can be further subdivided into fields such as:

- Salutation
- First name
- Middle Initial
- Last Name
- Suffix
- Title
- Company Name
- Address 1
- Address 2
- City
- State
- Zip code
- Telephone (Etc.)

These separated fields can always be put together in a Variable Data Printing piece, but are extremely difficult to break apart if they are all in one field. Imagine it this way, however you supply your data that is the way it will look on your printed piece. For example, if the data had one column with the "Last Name, First Name", that is the way that your data will print on your piece. But, if your data has two columns, one with the Last Name and the other with the First Name, then your piece can be generated however you please. Likewise, if you have blank/incomplete fields in your database, they will print with blanks or may be rejected in the mail.

Below is an image showing what your file will look like.
Visit our website to download an Excel template to get you started!

Salutation	First Name	Last Name	Suffix	Title	Department	Company Name	Street Address or PO box	City	State	Zip
Mr.	John	Smith	Sr.	Manager	Accounting Department	ABC Company	123 Main St.	Cleveland	OH	12345