

Case Study

Society for Neuroscience Leverages Ringgold Identify Database to Standardize and Augment its Information Assets

The Society for Neuroscience (SfN) is the world's largest organization of scientists and physicians devoted to understanding the brain and nervous system. SfN has more than 36,000 members in more than 95 countries and publishes two highly regarded scientific journals, *JNeurosci: The Journal of Neuroscience*, and *eNeuro*.

SfN requires enterprise-wide intelligence for both strategic guidance and to fully implement current policies. In order to plan for its next phase of development, SfN wanted to gain a deeper understanding of its current constituents by answering questions such as:

- How is membership trending in relation to industry sector?
- Are there opportunities to expand membership beyond the traditional academic sphere?
- Which organizations contribute most significantly to membership?
- How can we accurately gauge total engagement with the society on both an organizational and individual level?

Data was the key to answering these strategic and operational queries. While SfN possessed a wealth of records and information on their members and constituent organizations, a lack of standardization and demographic data prevented it from employing its data as an asset.

Members' and authors' organizational affiliations were captured in its association management system as free text fields. This data included misspellings, acronyms, and abbreviations. SfN wanted to gain deeper understanding of its member and constituent population but was unable to do so with the data in its current state. SfN identified that it needed to both standardize its data and augment it with demographic details that would allow for accurate and multi-faceted analysis.

Fortuitously, SfN realized they already had a resource to support this broad initiative: the Ringgold Identify Database. As a longstanding provider of persistent organization identifiers (PIDs) with over 600,000 organizational identifiers and metadata records, the Ringgold Identify Database was uniquely positioned to support SfN in this endeavor.

SfN began to leverage Ringgold Identify Database as an enterprise-wide authority file to standardize all manner of organizations, regardless of role: member affiliation and author affiliation, in addition to the existing application of using the Database for institutional subscribers and prospects.



Company

Society for Neuroscience

Location

Washington, DC

About

Founded in 1969, the Society for Neuroscience (SfN) now has nearly 35,000 members in more than 95 countries. Year-round programming includes the publishing of two highly regarded scientific journals, *JNeurosci* and *eNeuro*; professional development resources and career training through Neuronline, the Society's home for learning and discussion; science advocacy and public policy engagement including annual Capitol Hill Day; and a variety of engaging public outreach efforts, led by the expanding and interactive collection of public-facing resources on [BrainFacts.org](https://www.brainfacts.org).



Specifically, SfN took a two-pronged approach

1. **Capture accurate affiliations at the time of record creation.** SfN embedded Ringgold Identify Database into a key workflow: account creation, which is used for member registration and manuscript submission among other activities. Thus, members and submitting authors now enter their affiliation using a drop-down menu of institution names driven by Ringgold Identify Database. No longer entered as free text, each affiliation is standardized, and the Ringgold ID is embedded in the records' metadata within SfN's association management system. SfN hosts a local copy of Ringgold Identify Database, which is joined to its association management system implementation.
2. **Normalize existing member and author records.** SfN engaged Ringgold's experts to map key sets of non-standardized affiliations to the Ringgold Identify Database via the Ringgold Audit Service. Over a period of two years, SfN selected high-priority member and author records and submitted them to Ringgold for mapping. Once each member affiliation was mapped to an organization record in the Ringgold Identify Database — including academic, government, hospital, or department-level records — SfN was provided with files enabling the swift importation of accurate affiliation data back into the association management system.

Today over 45,000 records in SfN's association management system contain a Ringgold ID, giving staff a more accurate picture of total engagement between authors, members, and their affiliated institutions. Operationally, SfN is able to provide better value to organizations and individual members because it is able to understand total engagement across different sectors and is able to create incentives to increase overall engagement.



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