



**Client:** Castle Trust  
**Sector:** Finance  
**Project:** Design, development and implementation of a highly complex address matching solution to access, cleanse match and collate some 60 million records to support Castle Trust's investment and mortgage services.



## Unlocking the UK housing market for investors and homeowners

**The Challenge: The integration, cleansing, and ongoing updating of 60 million records representing UK houses worth more than £4,000bn.**

Founded at the end of 2010, Castle Trust is a new type of financial institution, which unlocks the UK housing market for investors seeking house price returns, and provides new choices for homeowners seeking flexibility in how they buy or remortgage their home.

Castle Trust has two lines of business: Partnership Mortgages where the amount clients repay depends upon the change in value of their property; and HouSAs, fixed term investments that enable clients to share in the returns of UK house prices (as measured by the Halifax House Price Index). As both lines of business are heavily dependent on accurate information on house price information across the UK, it is crucial to the business that it has access to accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive information about house sales throughout the UK, including price and other property details.

### Efficient, effective information management

"The UK housing market provides a substantial investment opportunity which we are ideally placed to help investors access, while at the same time breathing much needed life into the mortgage market," explained Castle Trust's Chief Technology Officer, Tony Pauley. "Our senior management team has extensive investment and mortgage industry experience and we needed immediate access to comprehensive and accurate information about every aspect of the UK housing property market."

Worth more than £4,000bn, housing is the largest asset class in the UK but had previously been inaccessible to most investors. Efficient and effective management of the financial exposure that investors and homeowners have to housing was therefore crucial to the future success of Castle Trust.

Within the UK, there are a number of data sources that provide information about house prices over the years. However, these data sources reside in different locations, on various platforms and are structured in different ways. Pulling together all of this disparate information, amalgamating records, ensuring that each individual property was correctly identified and aggregating the information so that Castle Trust has an immediate picture of the state of the business and can generate meaningful reports based on trusted, accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date information was critical.

*"Pinesoft understands our business, has major expertise in address and record matching and has worked with us to develop and implement a solution that meets our requirements and objectives – both today and for the future."*

Tony Pauley  
Chief Technology Officer  
Castle Trust

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Tony Pauley  
Chief Technology Officer  
Castle Trust

### **The partner of choice**

Castle Trust approached a number of bespoke development organisations including Pinesoft – Central London-based development specialists in the rapid development of bespoke software systems for start-ups and fast moving businesses. "Pinesoft was our partner of choice," continued Tony Pauley. "We had clear and unique requirements and needed a partner that had proven expertise in the development of highly complex record matching applications."

Pinesoft's client base includes DHL, for which Pinesoft had developed a Downstream Access management system to control bulk mail management and processing. The system interfaced to the Royal Mail E\*Pro system and ensured that the data submitted by DHL very accurately matched the mailings posted to the Royal Mail, a factor that further reinforced Castle Trust's decision to partner with Pinesoft. "It was clear that Pinesoft had substantial expertise in delivering data from poorly defined records and equally importantly, they were keen to enter into a long term partnership with us," added Tony Pauley.

Satisfied that in Pinesoft, Castle Trust had identified a partner with the expertise, knowledge and flexibility that were critical to the success of the project, the two organisations began a detailed analysis and review of Castle Trust's immediate and long term objectives. "As a start-up, we had a very clear understanding of what we wanted," explained Tony Pauley. "However, our requirements continue to evolve and Pinesoft's flexibility to accommodate our changes at all stages is something that is almost unique amongst development companies."

### **60 million records**

Working closely with Castle Trust's stakeholders, Pinesoft began the development phase of the project. "This was a highly complex project that involved accessing, cleansing and matching some 60 million records on the UK's housing market," explained Dr Stephen Dakin, Pinesoft's Managing Director. "The solution had to identify every property in the UK by letterbox and as each data source structured and recorded the data differently, the development phase was extremely challenging technically as a single error in cross matching could have serious repercussions."

Development, implementation and testing of the new solution were completed over a six month period. Now live, Castle Trust's application is delivering the information that is so critical to the ongoing success of the business. "Our bespoke application gives us an extremely comprehensive dataset of house prices going back some 20 years for all types of properties across the UK," explained Tony Pauley. "Address matching is the key and with this information, we are able offer our clients both investment and mortgage services."

### **The cornerstone of the business**

Castle Trust is now able to generate reports based on the most accurate and up-to-date information available, providing an immediate indication of the company's financial position as well as those of its investment and mortgage clients. "This application is the cornerstone of our business," concluded Tony Pauley. "Our partnership with Pinesoft has resulted in a highly robust and scalable solution that delivers the information we need, when we need it and in the required format. Pinesoft understands our business, has major expertise in address and record matching and has developed and implemented a solution that meets our requirements and objectives – both today and for the future."

So impressed has Castle Trust been with Pinesoft that it has now asked the company to provide Managed IT Services, managing, maintaining and supporting the business' entire IT infrastructure. Future plans also include further development and service consolidation.