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Data quality drives better fintech experiences

Richard Zhao

Richard Zhao leads Plaid's Transactions product and engineering team.

Ever wonder how your favorite fintech apps get accurate and updated user-permissioned data? It's not as simple as you might think. A lot of work happens behind-the-scenes to make your experience using these apps as convenient and seamless as possible. Plaid connects with financial institutions and banks of all sizes to deliver those great experiences for you.

In this blog post, we'll cover four important factors that contribute to your apps being up-to-date: connection success rate, connection longevity, data freshness, and uptime. We'll explain the role these factors play in providing data to the apps you use to manage your financial life.

What is data connectivity?

Today, Plaid enables people to securely access and share their financial data from over 11,000 financial institutions globally, either through direct integrations or [bank APIs](#). This means by using Plaid you can more easily and securely link your financial data from bank accounts and credit cards with an entire ecosystem of [fintech apps](#). For example, people use apps to understand and manage their finances (Copilot), negotiate a better rate on bills (Truebill), invest for the future (Betterment), and much more.

But our work goes beyond that. For example, if you're using an app like [Acorns](#) to round-up purchases and invest your spare change, you'll probably want to see regular updates of your transactions to keep track of how much spare change is adding up. For this specific use case, you can see why accessing and sharing fresh data can be very important. That's where my team comes in: we facilitate that entire process of retrieving and standardizing transaction data, and making sure it's sent to your apps when you make a purchase.

So let's dive into the top dimensions of data quality that we focus on to enable the best possible in-app experience:

Connection success rate

What this means: your ability to successfully link your bank account to an app so you can share your data. The success rate of connecting an account varies and we know that it can be a pain when you're unable to link your account at all when signing up for an app. Connection success rate hinges on a number of factors like seamless support for app-to-app authentication on mobile, and the speed of two-factor authentication (extra security layer using SMS or email codes). These are just a few of the areas in which Plaid works with financial institutions to help you connect to the apps that you rely on to manage your finances.

Connection longevity

What this means: the average length of time that a data connection will remain active after you link your bank account to an app. People typically have multiple financial accounts and apps that they use regularly. Ideally, a person links their financial accounts once as part of an app's onboarding experience and then expects their data connection to be ongoing. However, there are times when a person may need to re-authenticate (re-link their account to an app), which may be inconvenient given the number of apps and accounts they use.

While data connection is important to a seamless in-app experience, we also know that it's important for you to have visibility into and control over your data connections. Ultimately, it's your choice to decide which apps to share your financial data with and when. That's why we built the [Plaid Portal](#), which helps you easily see where your financial accounts are connected to (apps) and what data is being shared. And if you're no longer using a particular app, you can choose to disconnect the connection and stop sharing your data with the app altogether.

Data freshness

What this means: how often a bank returns data about your transactions to an app. The gold standard for data freshness is being able to see your transactions in an app within seconds from when they happen. Anything below that can contribute to a less than optimal experience, particularly for apps that help people manage their finances—that's why we're continuing to help financial institutions and creators of fintech apps to provide more timely data updates for the benefit of their customers (people like you).

For example, [Branch](#) is an app that helps companies pay their employees with instant disbursement and streamlined payroll services. Branch leverages the [Plaid Exchange](#) API platform to provide real-time transaction updates to all connected apps so that their users can have an accurate picture of their finances while on-the-go.

Uptime

What this means: the duration (percentage of time) in which a bank connection is in operation (online) to enable your data to be shared with an app. We understand how frustrating it is when you're trying to link your bank and credit card accounts to an app, but encounter unexpected bank downtime or maintenance. Regardless of the reason or

cause for downtime, it can potentially prevent you from being able to readily access your financial data. Generally, we see many banks operate somewhere between 99.0% (resulting in 7 hours of downtime a month) and 99.9% (43 minutes of downtime a month). We monitor the uptime for bank connections, and in our view 99.99% uptime is the gold standard that every bank should try to meet, which is equivalent to no more than 4 minutes of downtime a month.

Uptime will vary by institution, but it's a dimension of data quality that is a high priority for Plaid and financial institutions. We're always partnering with financial institutions of all sizes to prioritize your experience and to quickly resolve any issues that may cause downtime.

Over the course of this year, we'll share more about our work to deliver reliable access to your financial data so you get the most out of your favorite fintech apps. In the meantime, if you're interested in learning more about how Plaid works, check out [our website](#). And let us know what you think - tweet at us [@Plaid](#).