### column (Index of Column Containing Unique Values for Record)

This element specifies the column within the specified external data source that contains unique data for the current record within that data source. This element shall be used in conjunction with the [uniqueTag](uniqueTag.docx) element (§) to maintain a relationship [between](between.docx) a specific record within an external data source and a given source or merged document. The val attribute on this element shall be interpreted as a zero-based index into the columns specified by the data source, specifying the resulting column as the column in which the [uniqueTag](uniqueTag.docx) element shall be looked up.

If this element specifies a column number which exceeds the number of columns in the specified external data source, then its value shall be ignored.

[Note: This information is necessary as part of a mail merge as records may be added or deleted from external data sources, and a means must be provided to maintain record-specific inclusion or exclusion data using the [active](active.docx) element (§) and the affected external data record when the WordprocessingML document is reconnected to the external data source irrespective of the ordering of the records within the external data source. end note]

[Example: Consider the following WordprocessingML fragment for the information about a single record in a source document for a mail merge:

<w:[recipientData](recipientData.docx)>

  <w:[active](active.docx) w:val="0" />

<w:[column](column.docx) w:val="12" />

  <w:[uniqueTag](uniqueTag.docx) w:val="258865469" />

</w:[recipientData](recipientData.docx)>

The external data record associated with this information is specified via the column in the external data source corresponding to the column element with a val attribute equal to 12, which contains a row whose value in this column has a value corresponding to the [uniqueTag](uniqueTag.docx) element (§) with a val attribute equal to 258865469. This record will not be imported into the merged WordprocessingML document as the [active](active.docx) (§) element associated with the given external data record has a val attribute equal to 0.

In other words, when the specified external data source is connected to, the record within the thirteenth column of the external data source that has the contents 258865469, and not populate mapped fields in a merged document with data from that record. end example]

|  |
| --- |
| Parent Elements |
| [recipientData](recipientData.docx) (§) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Attributes | Description |
| val (Decimal Number Value) | Specifies that the contents of this attribute will contain a decimal number.  The contents of this decimal number are interpreted based on the context of the parent [XML](XML.docx) element.  [Example: Consider the following numeric WordprocessingML property of [type](type.docx) [ST\_DecimalNumber](ST_DecimalNumber.docx):  <w:… w:val="1512645511" />  The value of the val attribute is a decimal number whose value must be interpreted in the context of the parent element. end example]  The possible values for this attribute are defined by the [ST\_DecimalNumber](ST_DecimalNumber.docx) simple [type](type.docx) (§). |

The following [XML](XML.docx) Schema fragment defines the contents of this element:

<complexType [name](name.docx)="CT\_DecimalNumber">

<attribute [name](name.docx)="val" [type](type.docx)="[ST\_DecimalNumber](ST_DecimalNumber.docx)" use="required"/>

</complexType>