### connectString (Data Source Connection String)

This element specifies the connection string used to reconnect to an external data source. The string within this element's val attribute shall contain the connection string that the hosting application shall pass to a external data source access application to enable the WordprocessingML document to be reconnected to the specified external data source.

[Note: This string is generally comprised of a series of name/value pairs, delimited by semicolons, determined by the data source access application and the external data source that is accessed. end note]

If this string is omitted, then no [legacy](legacy.docx) connection string shall be associated with this mail merge.

This connection string should be ignored under the following conditions:

* The [udl](udl.docx) element (§) is present within the mail merge data
* The [dataType](dataType.docx) element (§) is set to native
* The current application is able to use the information contained in the [odso](odso.docx) element (§) to access the data source

[Guidance: In this case, using the connection string in the [udl](udl.docx) element will provide an equal or greater amount of connection information for the mail merge data source for clients which support it. end guidance]

[Example: Consider a merged WordprocessingML document that has been connected to an external data source for the purposes of a mail merge. The following WordprocessingML fragment represents the [legacy](legacy.docx) connection string used to connect to the external data source when the merged WordprocessingML document is reopened:

<w:connectString w:val="Provider=Example;Password=Test;User ID=readonly;…" />

The connectString element specifies that the string Provider=Example;Password=Test;User ID=readonly;… shall be used to enable the given WordprocessingML document to be reconnected to the specified external data source. end example]

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

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| --- | --- |
| Attributes | Description |
| val (String Value) | Specifies that its contents will contain a string.  The contents of this string are interpreted based on the context of the parent [XML](XML.docx) element.  [Example: Consider the following WordprocessingML fragment:  <w:[pPr](pPr.docx)>  <w:[pStyle](pStyle.docx) w:val="heading1" />  </w:[pPr](pPr.docx)>  The value of the val attribute is the ID of the associated paragraph style's styleId.  However, consider the following fragment:  <w:[sdtPr](sdtPr.docx)>  <w:[alias](alias.docx) w:val="SDT Title Example" />  ...  </w:[sdtPr](sdtPr.docx)>  In this case, the decimal number in the val attribute is the [caption](caption.docx) of the parent structured document tag. In each case, the value is interpreted in the context of the parent element. end example]  The possible values for this attribute are defined by the [ST\_String](ST_String.docx) simple [type](type.docx) (§). |

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

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

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

</complexType>