

TECHNOLOGY REVIEW · WRITTEN RECOMMENDATION 1 OF 2

Document pack preparation and delivery

The problem, the options considered at each cost level, the recommendation and the plan to implement it. This is one of two recommendations arising from the same review. The companion report covers document cross-checking.

Prepared for	The directors of [REDACTED]
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Our reference	[REDACTED]
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About this sample edition

This is a real recommendation from a review of one of our own client-facing businesses, written up in the format a client receives. We were our own first client and the tool this report recommends is in daily use today. Black bars are genuine redactions covering figures and details that are commercially sensitive or would identify the firm. No number has been invented for the sake of the sample.

Document control

ITEM	DETAIL
Title	Written recommendation 1 of 2, document pack preparation and delivery
Client	[REDACTED]
Engagement	Technology Review Day
Author	Carl Swift, Upaclick Limited
Status	Written up from the original review for publication as a sample
Companion report	Written recommendation 2 of 2, document cross-checking

Important notices

- N.1** This report is practical technology guidance. It is not legal advice, it is not financial advice and it does not certify GDPR compliance. Where a question needs a solicitor, a data protection specialist or a regulated adviser, the report says so. Responsibility for compliance stays with the business.
- N.2** The report and everything in it belong to the client it was written for. It can be acted on in-house, taken to any supplier, or acted on not at all. The advice fee is not contingent on any build going ahead, and any build is a separate piece of work with its own quote.
- N.3** Declaration for the sample edition. The firm reviewed here is one of our own client-facing businesses, and the tool this report recommended was built by us. We publish it because it shows the standard we hold ourselves to, and because we will not invent client case studies.
- N.4** Redactions in the sample edition are shown as black bars. They cover our own commercial figures and details that would identify the firm or its clients. The operational numbers that carry the argument, the minutes and the monthly volumes, are real and unredacted.

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1 Background, scope and information relied on

1.1 Background and instruction

- 1.1.1 The firm is a small UK client-facing professional services business handling sensitive client documents as part of everyday client work. Packs of completed documents go back out to clients regularly, and the work of sending them safely sits with the same people who do everything else.
- 1.1.2 The instruction for the review was a staffing question rather than a technology wish. The admin load was approaching the point where it would force recruitment, and the directors wanted to know whether the right changes could push that point back. Employing another member of staff is a direct cost of thirty thousand pounds and more a year. That is the yardstick every recommendation from this review is measured against, and it spans both reports, not this one alone.

1.2 Scope of this report

- 1.2.1 This report covers one finding from the review, the preparation and delivery of document packs to clients. The review's other finding, document cross-checking, has its own report. The firm's professional client work itself, and the wider systems that support it, are outside the scope of both.

1.3 Information relied on

- 1.3.1 The process was followed end to end at the desk where it happens. The timings in this report come from the people doing the work and the monthly volumes come from the firm's own records. Where a figure is an estimate it is written as one, about, around, roughly, rather than dressed up as precision.

1.4 Method

- 1.4.1 The finding is put through a three-way test, set out in section 3. Change the process for nothing, buy something off the shelf, or build a small tool. The levels are always taken in that order and the search stops at the first level that genuinely removes the problem, because the cheapest fix that works wins.

2 The problem

ITEM	OBSERVED POSITION
Process	Assemble the pack, password protect the file, attach it to an email, then text the client the password
Manual time	About 6 minutes a pack
Volume	75 packs a month
Monthly cost	Around 7.5 hours of staff time
Software	Pack assembly runs on software licensed per user, per year, at [REDACTED] a seat. Twelve screens of features of which two are used, combine the documents and add an index

- 2.1 Every step in the chain is done by hand and every step is load-bearing. The pack has to be assembled, it has to be protected, it has to reach the client and the client has to be able to open it. Nobody in the chain is doing anything wasteful. The chain itself is the waste.
- 2.2 There is a security cost hiding in the convenience. A password protected file sent as an attachment sits in the client's inbox indefinitely, where it can be copied and attacked at leisure. The password travels by text, which is right, but the file it unlocks never expires.
- 2.3 The licence is the third strand. The firm pays annually, per user, for a product it uses two features of, and the price renews whether or not the rest is ever touched.
- 2.4 This is not a broken process. It is necessary work being done the slowest defensible way. A process that should not exist gets deleted for free. Necessary work has to be made faster, and that usually costs something.

3 Options considered, at three cost levels

- 3.1 The finding is priced at three levels before anything is recommended, in order, stopping at the first level that removes the problem. Reviews usually stop at level one or two. This finding, unusually, cleared the bar for a build.

LEVEL	ASSESSMENT	VERDICT
1. Cost nothing	Reorder the steps, drop steps nobody needs, use settings already present in the tools the firm owns. None of it removes the chain, because every step in it is load-bearing. The work itself is the burden, not the order it is done in.	Rejected
2. Buy off the shelf	The obvious products each cover part of the chain, merging on one side or secure delivery on the other. Stitching two products together closes the gap but brings back per-seat annual pricing for a workflow the firm uses two features of. That is the same problem the review started with.	Rejected
3. Build small	One tool that merges the pack, adds the header and index, and sends the client a download link while the password goes by text. Narrow, stable, repeats 75 times a month and never changes shape. This is the profile a small build exists for.	Recommended

Product names at level two are withheld in this published sample. In your report the products are named, with their pricing, in this table.

- 3.2 A build is the last resort, justified only for a narrow, stable workflow that repeats often and never changes shape. If either earlier level had passed, this report would be recommending it instead, because the cheaper answer that works always wins.

4 The recommendation

- 4.1 Replace the licence and the manual chain with one small tool. Staff pick the documents for the pack and press one button. The tool merges them into a single file, adds a header and an index, and sends the client an email with a download link while the password goes separately by text. No attachment, no copying passwords about, no extra steps.
- 4.2 This is also safer, not just faster. The gain is not the text message, the password always went that way. The gain is what lands with the client. Before, a password protected file sat in their inbox forever. Now they get a download link with an expiry and brute force protection, and once it expires there is no file left behind. Every pack goes out looking the same, with a proper header and index, which is a small thing that clients notice.
- 4.3 The annual per-user licence is cancelled at its next renewal, which removes a recurring cost of ██████ a year at current staffing. The tool is owned outright, so nothing replaces that line.

4.4 Requirements the build must meet

REF	REQUIREMENT
R1.a	Link expiry and a cap on failed download attempts, set in one place
R1.b	A record of what was sent, to whom and when
R1.c	Output that matches the firm's document standards, header and index included
R1.d	A fallback. When a send fails the manual chain must still be possible so that no client waits on a tool

5 Data protection actions before go-live

REF	ACTION
DP.1	Update the privacy notice so it describes the new delivery route accurately
DP.2	Set link expiry and the failed-attempt cap deliberately and write the settings down
DP.3	Give the send log a retention period. It is personal data in its own right
DP.4	Keep the staff rules to one page. Which tools are approved, what must never be entered, when a human has to check the output

- 5.1 None of this is exotic and all of it is in the implementation plan. The boundary in notice N.1 applies with full force. This is practical guidance from experience, not legal advice.

6 Costs and payback

ITEM	POSITION
Time returned	About 7.5 hours of staff time a month
Recurring cost removed	The annual per-user licence, [REDACTED] a year at current staffing
Build cost	[REDACTED]
Running cost	None. Owned outright, for life. No subscription, nothing to renew
Payback on hours alone	Slow on the direct hours alone, and we say so rather than dressing it up

- 6.1 Stated honestly, on the direct saving alone a build like this would not be worth it for every business. The justification here is the staffing yardstick in paragraph 1.1.2, met across several changes of which this is one. Together with the companion recommendation the two builds give back nearly a working week of staff time every month, and they carry their weight as part of that wider set of changes.

The build cost is redacted because it is our own commercial pricing and because a figure quoted for this firm would mislead you about yours. In your report this table carries the real quoted figures, and the advice fee is never contingent on a build going ahead.

7 Implementation plan, risks and review triggers

STEP	ACTION	GATE BEFORE THE NEXT STEP
1	Agree the scope in writing. One page. What it merges, how the link and expiry behave, what gets logged. The manual fallback is part of the scope, not an afterthought	Scope signed off
2	Build the tool and prove it on dummy documents. No client data touches it until the send, the expiry and the failed-attempt cap are demonstrated on test files	Demonstration passed
3	Complete the data protection actions, DP.1 to DP.4. Update the privacy notice and the one-page staff rules before any client pack goes through the new route	Section 5 actions complete
4	Run it alongside the old chain, then switch. Cancel the licence at its next renewal date so nothing is paid for a day longer than necessary	Parallel period trusted

Risks

REF	RISK	MITIGATION IN THIS PLAN
K.1	A send fails and a client is left waiting	R1.d, the manual chain stays available as a fallback
K.2	Client data reaches the tool before the controls exist	Step 2 gates all client data behind demonstrated controls
K.3	Volumes change and the arithmetic with them	Volume change is a review trigger, paragraph 7.1

7.1 Review triggers. The off-the-shelf market moves and the level two verdict has a shelf life. If a single product appears that genuinely covers the whole chain without per-seat creep, reassess against it, owned build or not. If the volume of 75 packs a month changes materially, rerun the arithmetic in section 6. If the honest answer had been to change nothing, that is what this report would say.

Prepared by **Carl Swift, for and on behalf of Upaclick Limited**

Signature

[REDACTED]

Date

[REDACTED]

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