

Document cross-checking

The problem, the options considered at each cost level, the recommendation and the plan to implement it, including where the AI runs and why that choice is part of the advice. This is one of two recommendations arising from the same review. The companion report covers document pack preparation and delivery.

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 2 of 2, document cross-checking
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 1 of 2, document pack preparation and delivery

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. Documents come in from clients and providers, and the information in them has to be checked against itself before the work moves on.
- 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 cross-checking of information in incoming documents. The review's other finding, document pack preparation and delivery, 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	Information in incoming documents is cross-checked by eye, document against document
Formats	Hundreds of different layouts, changing whenever a provider redesigns their paperwork
Manual time	Around 18 minutes a case
Volume	Roughly 100 cases a month. Some cases generate more than one round of checking
Monthly cost	In the region of 30 hours of concentrated checking

- 2.1 The checking is not optional and it is not careless. It is careful, arduous work against layouts that never hold still, because the person checking is never working against a stable template.
- 2.2 It is the kind of work that tires people, and tired checking is where inconsistencies slip through to a client. The cost of the problem is therefore not only the thirty hours. It is also the risk carried by every case that gets checked at the end of a long afternoon.
- 2.3 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	Reordering, batching or second-person checking makes the work safer, not shorter. The eighteen minutes is the reading itself, and no change of process removes the reading.	Rejected
2. Buy off the shelf	Nothing we could find on the market read the firm's real mix of formats. The layouts run into the hundreds and change whenever a provider redesigns their paperwork.	Rejected
3. Build small	A tool that reads each document, extracts the relevant information and lays it side by side in one table, with a person making the final check and signing it off. The workflow is narrow and stable even though the incoming formats are not, which is exactly the split that justifies AI inside a small build.	Recommended

- 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 A tool that reads the incoming documents and cross references the information from each into one easy view table, so a person can see at a glance where things agree and where they do not. A human makes the final check and signs it off on every case. Nothing is accepted on the tool's word alone. The sign-off is part of the design, not a disclaimer.
- 4.2 The AI is not in this tool for fashion. It is non-negotiable, because extracting the right information from hundreds of shifting document formats with conventional code alone is practically impossible, especially when providers change their paperwork as often as they do. Code needs the format to hold still. AI reads the document the way a person does, and the person then confirms the result.

4.3 Requirements the build must meet

REF	REQUIREMENT
R2.a	One table per case showing each item of information, source document by source document, with agreements and differences visible at a glance
R2.b	Human sign-off on every case before the result is used. The tool must not be able to pass a case through on its own
R2.c	Routine new and changed document layouts must be handled without a rebuild. Handling shifting formats is the point of the tool
R2.d	Only the documents needed for the check go in. The extraction needs the document, not the whole file history

5 Where the AI runs, a decision in its own right

- 5.1 The AI behind a tool like this can be set up in more than one way, and the choice is part of the advice rather than a technical footnote. Two routes were put to the directors.

	ON-SITE HARDWARE	EU PROVIDER, ZERO RETENTION, DPA
Client data	Never leaves the firm's internal walls	Processed by the provider under contract
Cost profile	More up front, owned thereafter	Starts cheaper, recurring
Trust rests on	Your own hardware and access control	Zero retention in writing, a data processing agreement, transfer safeguards
Homework	Access control and logging, DP.2	Contract and settings evidence, DP.3

- 5.2 For this firm the on-site route was chosen, so the processing of client information never leaves its internal walls. Which route is right varies from business to business, and the decision is made deliberately in the implementation plan rather than falling out of a default.

6 Data protection actions before go-live

REF	ACTION
DP.1	Decide what goes into the tool first. Only the documents needed for the check, R2.d
DP.2	If on-site, access control and logging. Who can use the tool and what it records
DP.3	If a provider is used, zero retention confirmed in writing, a data processing agreement in place, storage location and transfer safeguards understood, training use of customer data switched off and evidenced
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

- 6.1 The boundary in notice N.1 applies with full force. This is practical guidance from experience, not legal advice, and where a data protection specialist or a solicitor is needed this report says so rather than guessing.

7 Costs and payback

ITEM	POSITION
Time returned	In the region of 30 hours of checking a month
Build cost	████████
Running cost	████████ for the on-site hardware, then 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

- 7.1 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.

Costs are redacted because they are our own commercial figures 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.

8 Implementation plan, risks and review triggers

STEP	ACTION	GATE BEFORE THE NEXT STEP
1	Confirm the hosting route chosen in section 5, for this firm on-site hardware, and complete the applicable section 6 actions, DP.1, DP.2 and DP.4. The alternative provider route in section 5 stays on file as review context	Section 6 actions complete
2	Agree the scope in writing against the requirements in section 4.3	Scope signed off
3	Build the tool and prove it against cases already checked by hand. It earns its place by agreeing with the humans before it assists them	Agreement demonstrated
4	Go live with the human sign-off in place, and keep it. The tool shortens the reading, it does not take over the judgement	None. Ongoing

Risks

REF	RISK	MITIGATION IN THIS PLAN
K.1	The tool is trusted too much, too soon	Step 3 proves it against hand-checked cases, and the sign-off in step 4 is permanent
K.2	Client data reaches the tool before the controls exist	Step 1 requires the applicable section 6 actions to be complete before the build begins
K.3	Volumes change and the arithmetic with them	Volume change is a review trigger, paragraph 8.1

8.1 Review triggers. The off-the-shelf market moves and the level two verdict has a shelf life. If a product appears that genuinely reads the firm's document mix, the honest advice is to reassess this tool against it, owned build or not. If the volume of around 100 checked cases a month changes materially, rerun the arithmetic in section 7. 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 Signature]

Date

[Redacted Date]

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