Kate Wadia

REPORTING FROM iTRENT – OPTIONS EXPLAINED

Clients using iTrent have the following options for reporting. This brief note summarises whether options may be suitable and highlights pros and cons to consider.

- **Reporting Services within iTrent**

- **Reporting Services outside of iTrent – licensed and supported via Midland HR**

- **Reporting Services that are separately licensed**

Here we note an overview of experiences and considerations for each option:

1. **Reporting Services within iTrent**

   - iTrent includes **standard ("core") reports** which are updated from time to time by Midland HR, found in "Management Information". Fully supported, and without any extra cost, these reports are nonetheless rarely if ever found to be sufficient for full reporting.
   - Small organisations with simple structures *may* be able to achieve full MI requirements by developing their use of **advanced search** and smart group tools.
   - Core iTrent reports are written in **Jasper**. *If* an organisation hosts their own application *and* they are confident with Jasper and SQL programming skills then it is possible to write your own reports to add to the Management Information section. Be wary that the programming skill reliance here becomes high and on each occasion of upgrade, reports that are bespoke will have to be re-installed. [**JasperSoft Studio** is the new (from 2015) version of the iReports tool, which is a (free!) reporting tool, designed to allow for this.]

1. **Reporting Services outside of iTrent – licensed and supported via Midland HR**

   - SAP **Business Objects** ("BO") is the third party product most commonly used currently to support iTrent reporting. Purchased via Midland HR, licenses should now be bought for Business Intelligence 4, choosing between the "Enterprise" or "Edge" versions. In the context of iTrent clients, Edge is likely to be suitable only for larger organisations with significant numbers of users to licence. BO has many advantages, including a rich functionality and support from Midland HR – but licences can be expensive.
   - **Cognos** provides an alternative to BO and this works with iTrent in a similar way. Rather fewer clients work with Cognos, but there is no reason not to do so should you wish.
   - As this note implies, reporting options for clients hosted by Midland HR are more limited in their choices. However, it may be possible – note at significant additional cost – to request a **Web Services** integration between iTrent and an alternative reporting tool.

2. Reporting Services that are separately licensed

- We might regard the ideal reporting tool to be **SQL Reporting Services**, were functionality and flexibility to be the only consideration. This is because of the possibilities for integrations with other organisational systems, based on SQL – and SharePoint in particular as a good example. However, at the current time, Midland HR do not actively support the use of SQL Reporting with iTrent and so clients must rely on internal/independent reporting skills to manage their SQL reporting. This also means that the option is only available to clients hosting their own applications. As with Jasper reports that are bespoke, this also brings maintenance and upgrade issues. It is likely therefore to be a very viable option for organisations with established IT/data teams managing reporting for different parts of a substantial organisation. Licenses are required, but bear in mind that these may well be in place already for use with other applications.
- A reducing number of iTrent clients may be using Oracle databases as their platform, in which case there are reporting options that could be used in a similar way to SQL reporting, which can only be used if the application is on a SQL database.

In summary:

The right reporting choice for any one organisation is most likely very apparent when the considerations of size, hosting arrangement, budget, in-house skill level and other systems in place within the organisation are all taken into account. A recommendation has to be based on organisational factors and cannot be offered as a generalisation. It is also worth noting movements over time – for example changes to the reporting partners chosen by Midland HR, improvements to core reports, licensing models (such as that seen in 2015 from SAP for BO), the emergence of new "analytics" products for HR – and of course the in-house trends towards reliance on any one platform or style of reporting.