

“Look under the bonnet” – Part-1 – Reporting / Power BI

- MAT reporting: clunky at best for several schools but simply not scaleable
- really doesn't represent a feasible MAT reporting solution for me.
- Add a field to the report ? - yes you have to do that for each school (you could export /import the report but the Bromcom offers the best solution for reporting and visualisation of information through their direct integration with Power BI. repetition is still there) which would get very tiresome

2nd January 2020, 11:38 PM#22

DODICT

Sorry @deshills not got round to replying to this but think others have confirmed for me.

*****'s solution at the time I looked it in the early part of 2019 had two big issues for me as a Data lead for a MAT. One is potentially not an issue for a single school where as the other should be a serious concern for any user of the live links feature.

Their suggested means of MAT reporting was to create live links in each school specific instance of the MIS and bring that into excel - to utilise power BI you then save this excel file in sharepoint etc. This was clunky at best for several schools but simply not scaleable - it really doesn't represent a feasible MAT reporting solution for me. Add a field to the report ? - yes you have to do that for each school (you could export /import the report but the repetition is still there) which would get very tiresome very quickly IMO and not the foundation I want to build a MAT's data reporting around.

The second issue that has been raised by a few people more recently was the security of these links - and yes at the point I saw it they were anonymous. I'd suggest this should be an issue for anyone not just an MAT but it neither of these points really seemed to hit home as issues when I discussed them. I like elements of ***** and really pleased to see them in the market but these elements took it from a contender to a not feasible at this time for us.

I can only think people aren't really using these features and ***** is winning customers as a refreshing UI update for fed up users of SIMS without wanting to do that much with their data - as if you do have grand aspirations for efficient analysis of your data there are definitely better solutions at the point I reviewed the market - certainly in a multiple school scenario. I know Progresso/Cloud school had potential reporting wise but let its self down pretty much everywhere else and development simply didnt listen to customers even when groups of them were singing in unison in a single room ! And ISams has flexibility albeit with complexity with their use of SSRS and both these had direct access to multiple schools via one or more reporting methods.

But at that time, and I still believe its the case now, Bromcom offers the best solution for reporting and visualisation of information through their direct integration with Power BI. They also provide consolidated summary datasets making the data needed to produce genuine actionable intelligence for schools pretty accessible without needing a DBA or expert BI developer. Is Bromcom perfect ? No, but they know that and crucially for me they are prepared to listen to their customers to improve their solution.

“Look under the bonnet” – Part-2 – Secondary Schools

- significant areas where workarounds have been required
- requests for change have not yet been accommodated by the developers and I feel repetitive in my requests.
- The client services team is ever changing and it is rare to find someone who understands secondaries in the UK, when you do they seem to be moved on quickly.
- User permissions are not ideal with bundling of permissions that are pretty abysmal in specific cases

2nd August 2019, 11:03 AM #4

Suedonim

We have been using ***** since we opened in September 2016, we currently have KS3 and will have year 10s from next year

This is my current evaluation, although please note it is only as good as my knowledge of how to use the system and as we have been building a new school there may well be some areas we could do much better. Also I have yet to find a perfect MIS

Overall I am fairly impressed although there are some significant areas where workarounds have been required and requests for change have not yet been accommodated by the developers and I feel repetitive in my requests. The client services team is ever changing and it is rare to find someone who understands secondaries in the UK, when you do they seem to be moved on quickly.

Student and parent information, Timetabling (using timetabler and ongoing amends direct to system), statutory returns, attendance, admissions and communications by both email and text with all groups including parents are excellent.

Custom reports are great with the ability to live link into both excel and Google sheets. Worthwhile having your data manager spend time getting to know how to use this area.

For data analysis and reporting I find the custom reports into excel the best solution, although there are areas where I struggle to get all the information I require out (specifically teaching groups). I am very interested to see how effective the new assessment module is for P8 analysis, it looks excellent on the surface.

The exams module has also recently been re-written and I am going to trial it with year 10 EOY exams.

The assessment baselines and targets are all annual whereas I am looking to track from KS2 through to end KS3 and end KS4. I have consistently had the response that it is “in development” so I hold a lot of information offline and use excel reports to update termly reports to MLT, SLT and Governors.

Parent reports are limited but work for us, they have to be created termly which each field reset to point to the correct dates for data, but they can be emailed at the touch of a button. Or you can use the parent portal (we haven’t yet but may well do this)

Teacher access is pretty good, lots of info to hand but as always GIGO counts and that relies on admin knowing where to put your information.

Behaviour management depends on how well this module is set up and what school requirements are but the automatic workflows are pretty good. A lot of the areas have to be set up by the school so your set up would be crucial.

User permissions are not ideal with bundling of permissions that are pretty abysmal in specific cases eg all admin roles have access to the core timetable. It is impossible to have a log in for a different business role so the ability to double check who can see what is missing.

I have no idea how easy a move it would be for a full school.

I am currently planning to review our MIS and plan to look at Bromcom, ISAMS and SIMS - I'm not yet convinced we won't stick with ***** tbh at least to see how we can manage Key Stage 4, this will help determine whether we are still an ***** school we start our 6th form in 2 more years