

JacanaForms

Make your reports sparkle with colour.

Wilson Bowden Plc use JacanaForms to sharpen up their reporting with colour

Wilson Bowden Plc is a major UK construction group with a £789m turnover. They have been using OPEN/DB as their AS/400 based report writing system since 1991. To produce forms output they had been using simple spool file overlays to achieve the desired effect. Due to increasing print requirements, it became necessary to find a new forms solution to improve the quality of the reports being produced.



One of the key requirements was a report which would show the progress of each housing development project as a progressively shaded bar graph, thus providing a graphical reference point to easily identify the progress of a number of projects on a single report. Another important requirement was to improve the quality of all existing day to day departmental reports by transforming standard AS/400 reports into electronic form reports. These changes were being planned for a new system under development.



After extensive evaluation JacanaForms was proven capable of addressing both these requirements.

For the existing departmental reports, the use of JacanaForms technology to transform the AS/400 reports from spool files was easily demonstrated. Standard report headings could be stored as objects in the design tool plus fields in the original report could be easily re-positioned and field characteristics such as size and font style changed as required. All achieved without any programming modifications to the underlying RPG programs!

For the progressively shaded bar graph enhancement, the features of JacanaForms were reviewed, in depth, to confirm that this report could indeed be produced using the JacanaForms technology. The bar graphs were to include variations of mono grey and textured shading to indicate project progress.

The form technology in use is based on the creation of a PCL data stream and this underpinned a review of possible printing partners. Hewlett Packard, the developer of the PCL standard, was chosen on a trial basis to check the robustness and speed of their different printers to produce the various reports under development.



During this printer review, the use of colour for the shaded bar graph report was researched. JacanaForms is one of the few electronic form products that can produce output for colour printing and from that point the printer review trials included a requirement for excellent colour reproduction. David Wilson Homes finally selected the HP4500 colour printer that was found to be impressive in all areas.



A central HP4500 printer is now used specifically for the bar graph report which, with the output from JacanaForms, reports on their key projects using a different colour to show the progress of each stage of completion.

Gareth Braithwaite, Group I.T. Director, adds, “JacanaForms proves that IBM midrange customers can get the best of both worlds – a modern NT based graphical reporting package working alongside our reliable AS/400. A new lease of life for our existing reporting systems”

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Momentum's report writer OPEN/DB is also marketed under a variety of derivative names including Info WorkPlace, Midas/Q, LANSAs Reporter and S/RW. The Information Interface functionality itself is the same at comparable release levels.