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Helping to harness ICT excellence for education in a constantly evolving digital world

Novatia Note 001: Control and Management of School and Trust Data

Do you sometimes feel like you're drowning in data? Here are three steps you can take to use data to inform strategic decisions, raise standards and improve learning.

Key Points

- Drowning in data?

- Gain control

- Three easy steps ...

  1. Vision
  2. Audit
  3. Action Plan

- Contact us to find out more about how to use your data effectively.

1. Set a Data Vision

The crucial first step is to decide how you aspire to use your data and to assess what ultimate outcomes you hope to achieve.

- **Establish some objectives for your data:** *What do you require as a bare minimum? What statistics must you report e.g. Governors, Ofsted, parents? What do you need to help you actively manage your academies or schools? What information would you like to provide real insight, allowing you to develop targeted interventions and track educational strategies?*

- **Consult with leaders about your trust/school data:** *What information would help you to run your MAT and schools better? What figures would education leaders like to see to enable them to implement any changes and improvements?*

- **Consider accessibility and timing of your data:** *Who do you want to access, interrogate and use the data? How up-to-date should it be? Should it be refreshed hourly, daily, weekly or termly? Should this be the same for each level within your MAT or academy/ school?*

- **Decide on budget and resources:** *What resources are you prepared to deploy? What budget implications are there in terms of human resource or systems?*

2. Carry out a Data Audit

Develop an understanding of your current situation by finding out how you currently capture, collect, surface and analyse your data. *Cont'd ...*

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2.   Data Audit *cont'd …*

- **Consider which data isn't adding any value and providing insights:** *Are some teachers and staff using their valuable time to input needless data?*

- **Take a look at your systems for any possible errors:** *Are there any areas you can identify where duplicate entry or re-entry of data might occur?*

- **Check data security levels:** *How is data being mapped or combined? Is your data being held in individual silos without easy access and without the ability to extract, combine and analyse?*

- **Establish just how effective your current systems are for collecting data:** *Are they helping you to surface, combine, analyse and use your data well?*

- **How much time is spent on entering, compiling, mining and analysing data?** *How often to you require reporting and is this a manual task? How onerous is the task and is the time spent acceptable?*

3.   Develop an Action Plan

How big is the gap between your desired state and reality? The last stage is an action plan and you making the commitment to implement those actions to close the gap. Your action plan will include a list of tasks that now need to be undertaken. These might include:

- Streamlining your systems to avoid possible duplicate data entry
- Ceasing the input of any unnecessary information
- Reducing and simplifying your data solutions
- Taking steps to insure your data security
- Implementing new solutions to access, combine and analyse your data
- Providing efficient, easy access analysis tools for your staff

This action plan should be distilled into a project plan with clear aims, activities, roles and responsibilities. Set specific aims that can be measured and are time bound.

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