The finance team at Clearview Intelligence is doing more work with the same staff thanks to iplicit

iplicit

Sector **Technology**	Previous Finance System **Access Dimensions**	Number of iplicit users **4**	Go Live Date **April 2023**

About.

Clearview Intelligence has been at the forefront of innovation in traffic management and intelligent transport systems for over five decades. Its journey has been marked by constant iteration, innovation and invention, from pioneering the first automatic traffic counter and solar-powered road studs to developing the cutting-edge Insight AI computer vision system and the development of smart solar powered stud technology.

The Challenge.

Claire MacDonagh was "red hot and burning with frustration" at the state of her business's accounting system when she decided to call iplicit.

You "almost needed to be a programmer" to use Access's software, says the Director of Finance at Clearview Intelligence — and the price was going up every year.

A move to iplicit has saved the organisation money, simplified processes and allowed the team to cope with a growing workload without having to recruit more staff.

'We were incredibly frustrated'
Clearview Intelligence doesn't have a large finance team and Claire says the work isn't complex in principle.

"It's sales and purchases, with orders ranging from millions of pounds for National Highways to hundreds of pounds to go and put some inductive loops in the road that send signals to the traffic counters at the roadside," she says.

"As well as the purchase ledger, we have projects to report on, as well as wages, expenses and the day-to-day work that comes in the door. We have two companies — the main one that does traffic delineation and a company, which does the traffic counting."
Yet she says the team was "incredibly frustrated" by Access Dimensions. "It seemed as though every time we had a problem, we were told 'You'll have to pay £5,000', even if the problem was really with the software," she says.

"The standard dashboards and reports they gave us were awful. They weren't working and we were asked for thousands of pounds to make them work. Finally, they said 'You've got to sign a three-year contract now', so we decided we were done."

Key Benefits.

■ Big time savings from a powerful but intuitive finance system
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■ Better credit control, with invoices sent straight from the finance software
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■ Simpler reporting, with data easily retrieved and imported into Excel

The Solution.

"Coincidentally, on the same day Access asked us to sign a three-year contract, I got an email from iplicit, so I rang them. I was red hot and burning with frustration," says Claire.

This wasn't the first time she had thought about changing software. She had previously looked at Sage and another system but found both "very expensive".

"We were coming out of Covid, the world was still scary and it didn't feel right for an SME to be committing tens of thousands of pounds to an accounts system," she says.

She said leaving the old finance system was hard work which consumed the team's attention — but it proved worth it.

"iplicit is a much more intuitive system and gives us a lot more flexibility," she says.

She has found the iplicit support team helpful. "If we need a report, they'll arrange it, and unlike other vendors, they won't say 'OK, that'll be £2,000'," she says.

"The company doesn't feel as money-grubbing as some others. If we have problems, people get to work fixing them.

'Consolidation is all done for me'
The work of Clearview Intelligence's finance team is dramatically quicker and easier with iplicit. The software has eliminated a lot of the manual processes that used to take up time.

"We didn't really have group consolidation in the old system, which was a pain," says Claire.

"We'd have to feed the data into Excel and then I'd consolidate the two companies in spreadsheets. But with iplicit, that's all done for me.

"Andy Clarke, iplicit's Customer Success Executive, does these webinars about forthcoming changes or things you didn't know about iplicit and they're fantastic. I either join them myself or encourage my team to join them. There's usually at least one little nugget in there that would really help us."

Claire MacDonagh
Director of Finance at Clearview Intelligence

"I love the fact that I can expand the reports in the general ledger and see the full monthly picture — or I can restrict them so I'm seeing only an individual legal entity. The system is also a great deal more searchable."

It's now much easier to send invoices and maintain good credit control.

"With Access, we couldn't email customers straight from the finance system," says Claire. "To send an invoice, you'd have to download it from the finance software and then attach it to an email. The process was the same with purchase orders. It was very time-consuming.

"Now, we can produce an invoice and send it to the customer, which not only makes invoicing easier but enables better credit control."

'Pulling out data is so much easier'
The feature that's made the biggest difference to Claire's working life is iplicit's Excel integration.
"Getting reports out to manipulate in Excel was the hardest thing with Access. They'd either come out as a CSV file or in some random format that we couldn't work with," she says.

"There was an API for Excel but it was quite difficult to use. You had to be trained in it and if you didn't use it regularly, the knowledge from the training would fall away. You almost needed to be a programmer to work it."

iplicit's live Excel integration makes this kind of work easy. "I know working in Excel is very much an accountant's thing and programmers tell me I shouldn't need it," says Claire. "But I like to manipulate data myself and pulling information out of the system is so much easier now. I can pull data into workbooks and do what I like with it."

'We've grown a lot — without growing the finance department'
With the help of iplicit, the Clearview Intelligence finance team has been able to handle a bigger workload without a corresponding increase in headcount.

"We've grown quite a lot in the past few years but we haven't grown the finance department," says Claire.

"It's hard to calculate exactly how much time iplicit is saving us but we know it is saving us time because we're doing many more transactions with the same number of people.

"And what's more, it's costing us £30,000 less a year than Access!"