

# IT & THE WASTE INDUSTRY

needed. For this need ready access to up-to-date information is vital.

## FACILITATING CHANGE

To achieve the culture change needed to improve operational performance data must become integral with the operational responsibilities of staff across the organisation. The number of people needing access to performance information is also increasing – it is no longer the domain of a few specialists.

The nature of these issues have meant that companies have had to take more time and care than they initially expected in reviewing, understanding and designing their new data management approach.

Managing this change in the face of reducing manpower, budgets and time is no easy task. However, mapping out your data streams can be a useful starting point:

- Your data: What data sources do you have (spreadsheets, plant systems)?
- How does your data come in (manually, via e-mail, remote monitors)?
- How often is data created (sporadic to continuous)?
- What format is your data in (standardised units, level of accuracy)?
- Is the data aggregated or factored?
- Is that data secure? What systems do you link with? Process monitoring equipment
- Property/geographical information systems
- SAP-type financial systems
- Personnel records: What reporting do you do?
- Management
- Shareholder
- How often do you report?
- What KPI do you use?
- What medium do you report to (paper, web)?

Feedback from the marketplace is suggesting that whilst spreadsheets have been fine in the past, they are not flexible enough to deal with all these new demands. So more companies are tackling this issue head on by using customised software and supporting

technologies to reduce the amount of costly human involvement in monitoring and reporting.

## WHAT DOES THE SOFTWARE SEEK TO DO?

Monitor-Pro software is an example of software to meet these needs. The software is already in use at hundreds of landfills across the UK waste industry, from single site users to companies that want access across multiple sites.

The software has been designed to meet the following criteria:

## FEATURES OF A DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Consistency – vital to ensuring that common rules apply to all data

Auditability – being able to track any changes made to data once in the database

Integrity – ensuring that imported data is correct and any KPI calculations are traceable

Efficiency – importing, processing and reporting data quickly and accurately

Scalability – having the ability to increase in size and capability to meet organisational changes

In addition, these systems must be able to communicate openly and effectively with other corporate systems and for its outputs to be viewed in multiple formats such as web, paper and electronic.

## HOW DOES IT WORK IN PRACTICE?

Put simply, data is imported into the database, where the user can choose what they want to do

with it. For Monitor-Pro users this is often one of a number of routine tasks – creating graphs or maps and reporting. For this, standard templates are usually created that simplify the process and mean that these tasks can be completed in a fraction of the time usually taken.

How could you benefit from using software to manage your data?

- business performance improvements from spotting trends and problems earlier
- giving regulators greater confidence in your management of key issues
- Significant time and cost savings through improved data control, analysis and reporting
- Seamless integration with existing management systems.

## SUMMARY

Increasingly waste management companies are realising that their data is an asset that should be more effectively used for purposes beyond simple compliance. This coincides with more time pressure on increasingly stretched people.

The resulting move to use software to help deal with the low-value, repetitive tasks is gathering pace...don't miss out. ■

## CASE STUDY

Waste Recycling Group (WRG) is one of the UK's largest waste management companies with approximately 90 landfill sites. WRG uses Monitor Pro software primarily to enhance its management and reporting of landfill-related data. Originally, the company used Monitor-LT as a single-site workstation application for a number of sites in Lincolnshire. As the group continued to grow, LT was rolled out to the North West, South East and Northern Regions, as a standard database tool.

As the company's data capture processes have developed, and the need to access that information has increased, WRG decided to share data simultaneously across a secure network. This has been made possible using Monitor-Enterprise licenses with data handling controlled by regionally-based Environmental Managers.

A trial of Monitor-Pro's existing Web-enabled software is being evaluated in order to allow simple data analysis and review across WRG's Intranet, and in the longer term, to evaluate the potential for secure access by third parties (regulators or consultants).

# DATA MANAGEMENT: DON'T FALL BEHIND

Waste companies are generating more and more data to fulfil legal reporting requirements. But many companies don't capitalise on this investment by using technology to get useful management information from the data. Tim Dowling from Monitor-Pro looks at what can be done and WRG's Managing Director, Graham Watson, provides an insight as to how they have done it.



**Tim Dowling**  
Sales & Marketing Manager, Monitor Pro

It's a fact that people throughout the waste management chain are increasingly finding themselves spending more time on repetitive and low-value tasks associated with collecting, processing and reporting data and information.

Some of this is from an internally generated demand, but the majority is in order to meet stringent new legislative conditions. In the first instance, this means more monitoring, measurement and more reports.

Somewhere in the resulting morass of data, important timely management information gets obscured or lost. Seemingly straightforward questions such as; are we complying? What are our emissions per tonne of waste landfilled? Are any complaints being dealt with? are not easily answered.

## CHALLENGES FOR WASTE MANAGERS

### MANAGING THE WORKLOAD

Waste companies produce multiple reports for different people (regulators, planners, own management). Just keeping track of what data is needed and what reporting format is required can be time-

consuming enough alongside other operational priorities.

Avoiding inconsistencies – often the same source data is manipulated in different ways to present to different parties. This creates a major challenge when information is updated to avoid inconsistencies

### MEETING THE STANDARDS

The standards for data integrity and verification methods are rapidly evolving. Using spreadsheet-based systems to meet these standards will not be feasible for much longer.

### KEEPING THE INITIATIVE

There is a lot more information on environmental performance within the public domain – not all of it accurate! Companies need to maintain the initiative on communicating their performance, disregarding the concept of an annual reporting cycle if



Phone for details: 1604 620426