

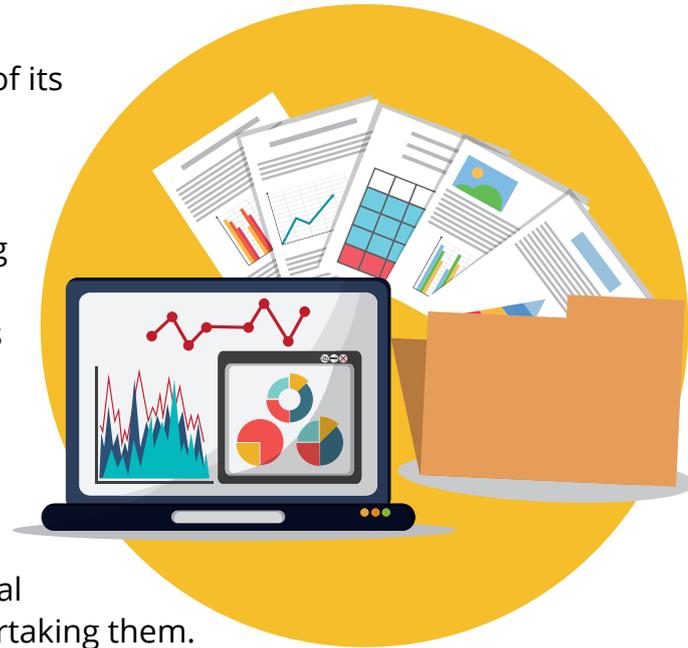
What's All This About Digitisation?

Unless you have been hiding under a rock for the past year, you can hardly have missed all the hype about “digitisation” of business!

But what does it mean and, more importantly, what are the implications of it for the average SME business - and should you care anyway?

The Business Digital Index, which is the largest study of its kind into the digital capabilities of the UK’s small businesses, makes it clear why you should: small businesses that embrace technology grow faster and are more productive than those that don’t. Plus, giving up manual processes will typically save about 1 day each week. That’s a lot more time to talk to customers and sell more stuff!

In reality, whether or not you chose to adopt technological solutions and how far you decide to adopt them comes down to mindset. All the evidence suggests that businesses which stay frozen in a manual wilderness will see their digital-savvy competitors overtaking them.



Here is what you need to know: at its simplest level, “digitisation” means using software, rather than pen and ink or a manual typewriter, to record a piece of information. The benefits are significant: data only needs to be inputted manually once and is then forever available to be used over and over again, by multiple users, and simultaneously.

The time saved in not having to carry out tedious, repetitious tasks is both obvious and well-documented.

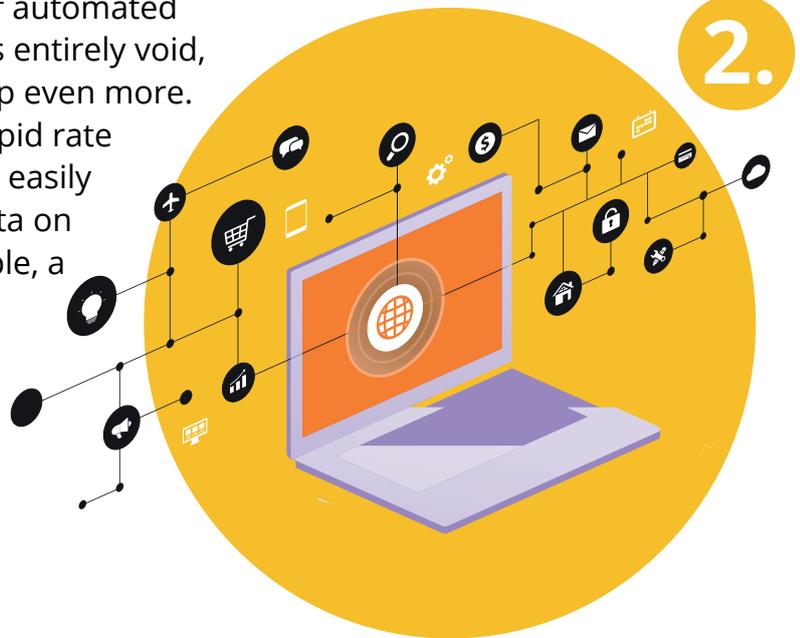
But this is only the start of the story. The rise of the “Internet of Things” means that data can be captured and stored from any source, ready for use.

1.



Process simplification: if data is captured and stored, it becomes available to be used whenever needed – so, for example, the correct name and address of a customer is always available to be utilised immediately at every step of the customer journey. By simply removing the need to manually input core information multiple times, the whole process is made simpler, faster and error free at every stage. No more correcting mis-spelt details!

Process automation: if data capture is itself automated then the need for any manual intervention is entirely void, meaning and the business process is sped up even more. The “Internet of Things” is developing at a rapid rate so that, with very little effort, businesses can easily find suitable apps and devices to capture data on every aspect of their business. So, for example, a manufacturer can track, in real time, which suppliers are meeting delivery times; which machinery in their factory is performing to expectations; what percentage of goods are being delivered to customers on time; and so on.



3.

Integration: businesses create multiple categories of data every day, and if a different software device is used for each category, then “data silos” are created. This means that unconnected pockets of data build up which can act as a brake on business efficiency because team members are unable to access the data they need across all parts of the business.

Accordingly, whilst “digitising” different activities within the business will add value, the real benefits come when all of the data captured by software can be pulled together and used across the whole business, whenever required.

The process of integration has the added benefit of completely removing the need for “management by spreadsheet”. This means that managers recover hours of time every week, as well as wholly avoiding the errors which, experience shows, always creep in via spreadsheets. Using software instead of spreadsheets also means that businesses can agree on “one version of the truth”, instead of the confusion that arises when every manager produces his or her own spreadsheet for any given issue.



Business reporting software – often referred to as business intelligence software – can itself act as an integrator, pulling every source of business data automatically into a single database, one or more times every day. Then, by means of some clever maths, the relevant bits of data are cross-referred to give users an immediate answer to questions which previously took hours of painstaking work, even supposing they could be uncovered at all.

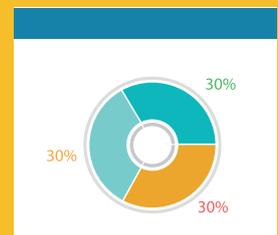
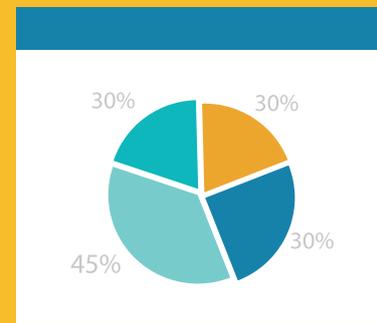
This is when digitisation really starts to power up the business: managers can gain a full understanding of what is happening day to day, together with real insights into business drivers, meaning decisions can be based on firm ground and not best guess.

However, traditional business intelligence software is very expensive to implement because it is built fresh each time to meet the specific needs of each business.

To fill the gap, in recent years dashboard products have appeared which allow data analysts to design one-off reports quickly and much more cheaply but their limitations (static; often difficult to use and give very limited access to the underpinning data) mean that they seldom provide a complete solution.

Octelas business reporting software was designed to meet all of these challenges: reports are in tabular form (which allows the ability to drill down into any piece of data which has calculations behind it, enabling to user to make a deep dive into the issue) with optional visualisations to give a top-level overview.

Available on any web-enabled device, phone, tablet or PC, managers are freed up to focus on running the business not managing data.



illuminiis team of software developers and data analysts have used their deep knowledge of the data needs of SMEs to develop the 'Octelas' brand business reporting software. Since the first installation in 2012, Octelas has helped many SMEs gain full access to and manage their business data.

For more information visit:

📞 01908 410480 | ✉ info@illuminiis.co.uk | 🏠 illuminiis Insight Software Limited, Luminous House, 300 South Row, Milton Keynes, MK9 2FR