



## Whitepaper

# IntelliPRINT

for Lotus Notes & Domino

## Unlocking the business value of Notes & Domino data

### Reporting from Lotus Notes data - Key challenges and how you can overcome them

#### About this White Paper

This white paper discusses key challenges with the commonly used methods of reporting from Lotus Notes data including external reporting tools and Notes programming using LotusScript. It explores options to effortlessly enhance native reporting for rapid delivery of quality reports within the Notes paradigm.

#### Introduction

Lotus Notes was developed to serve as a platform to enable collaborative workflow applications to a large user base. It had established a large market presence long before the popularity of Enterprise Reporting. The core focus of the Lotus platform is to keep data robust and secure in a collaborative environment. However, it poses challenges in rapidly and easily transforming data into actionable information for users.

The view-based framework of Notes is often found to be limiting and any form of reporting requires writing of lengthy code using LotusScript or exporting data to vulnerable external tools. As a result, most users derive only a fraction of the potential value that the collaborative Notes application framework can deliver. This in turn, diminishes the return on investments in Notes infrastructure and applications.

#### Notes data – How do you get to it?

##### 1. Using Notes Views as a reporting interface

Generating reports from Notes Views helps business users view data within their applications. It is simple, user-friendly and users do not require intensive training. However, it does not offer visualization capabilities. Users are restricted to how data is presented in their Views and are not supported with dynamic reporting to suit their unique business situation. The Views need to be constantly modified / extended to fit varying information needs of users.

This method is highly resource intensive and does not support dynamic business situations.

##### 2. Native Notes Reporting using LotusScript

This approach ensures that data security and integrity are preserved, the business context is inherited, and the Notes application workflow is kept intact. It helps users visualize data inside Notes. While it overcomes a few limitations of using Notes Views, reporting, using LotusScript has its own limitations:

###### ■ Resource & Time Intensive

The time taken to programmatically create reports varies from several hours for basic reports to several days for complex reports. This imposes a significant overhead on the IT team and impacts mission critical Notes application development work. Likewise, report modification to meet specific or ad hoc information needs is also resource & time intensive.

###### ■ Limited Reporting Functionality

Reports created using LotusScript provide limited visualization capabilities. Visual representation of data in the form of charts is not supported.

##### 3. Reporting using tools external to Notes

There are a wide variety of external report creation tools with extensive functionality. These tools work well as a quick fix solution. Most tools offer visualization capabilities and also enable analysis, though not real-time.

However, none of these are native to the Notes and Domino framework. These tools connect to Notes data either using ODBC drivers or export Notes data to other formats, such as spreadsheets. This approach has inherent & critical challenges such as:

###### ■ Data Security

No inherent role based access control. As a result, multiple versions of every report are required to replicate native Notes ACL definitions that control access rights. This can create potential data security issues.

### ■ Data Integrity

The exported data can be modified, as most external environments do not provide the robust change tracking inherent to Notes. This compromises the reliability and accuracy of reported data.

### ■ Performance

There is a significant performance impact while accessing or exporting data from Notes and Domino through the ODBC connector. The performance degradation results in significant additional hardware investment and compromises business efficiency by considerably increasing system response times.

### ■ Other Limitations

- Information is not real-time
- Lack of business context: Reports generated from external tools lack the business context of the data in the Notes application. In other words, reporting happens as an independent activity outside the business application
- Inability to use native Notes functionalities like @Formula, multi-value fields, etc. cannot be leveraged

### What users really need:

Native Visualization of Notes & Domino data, while eliminating the inherent limitations of the above methods!

### Introducing IntelliPRINT Reporting

IntelliPRINT, the 2008 Lotus Best Tool/Utility Solution Award winner, has been delivering valuable service to customers for over 10 years, in managing all their reporting and printing needs from Notes and Domino applications.

IntelliPRINT Reporting is a Native Reporting component within the collaborative Notes & Domino framework. It enables organizations to deliver presentation-ready reports to users, within the collaborative Notes application framework.

As a Native Notes reporting tool it eliminates the challenges experienced with Notes Views, LotusScript or data-export reporting methods.

Limitations of Reporting from Lotus Notes addressed by IntelliPRINT Reporting:

- **Data Security:** Notes ACLs are inherited. Report data is user-customized based on access permissions.

- **Data Integrity:** Data integrity and business context are kept intact as no data export or ODBC connectivity is involved.

- **Performance:** Reports are saved in an IntelliPRINT format within the same Notes database. The size of the format file is less than 100kb and can be opened almost instantaneously. What's more, the report always reflects real-time information, as the data is fetched from the database each time the report is opened.

- **IT Overhead:** Absolutely none! Business users can create simple reports in minutes!

- **Presentation Quality:** Professional looking, well-formatted layouts and colors, plus, it's a print-ready, WYSIWYG report.

- **Native Notes capability support:** Reports can be invoked from within Notes. More functionality can be added to the reports using native functionalities. For example, we can use '@dblookup' to pull a new data field from a different database into this report. Again, this doesn't involve any major coding and is possible from within the IntelliPRINT Report Designer.

### Conclusion

The shortened report development cycle, superior performance, advanced reporting functionality, presentation-quality reports, support for native Notes functionalities, all within the Notes data security framework, make IntelliPRINT Reporting the product of choice for reporting and printing from Lotus Notes & Domino data.

## Recent Awards



- 2009 Lotus CTO Award
- 2008 Lotus Best Tool / Utility Award
- 2008 Lotus CTO Award Finalist
- 2007 Lotus CTO Award
- 2007 Lotus Advisor Award

