



# IT solutions that deliver

## Customised Print Solution for Wicklow County Council

Ergo delivered a solution built around a robust, continuous forms laser printer with carefully calibrated software controls. Not only has the solution enabled Wicklow County Council to improve the efficiency of a failing process, it managed to replace two separate printers with one.

### Background

Like many public sector organisations Wicklow County Council is trying its best to extend the life of its IT investments while making sure that its processes remain as efficient as possible. The two elements frequently work against each other. It was a case in point in the Information System department at the County Buildings in Wicklow Town.

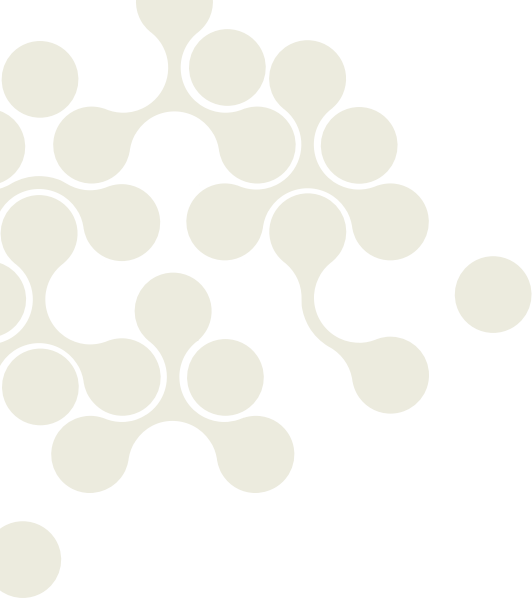
On average 2,000 sheets of cheques are printed every week. The cheques are bulk purchased for the job and come as A4 sheets with remittance details pre-printed above the perforation for the cheque. The sheets have tracker paper perforations down the side to ensure continuous printing.

The printer used for the polling cards was out of warranty and too expensive to maintain. IT also been an older machine had a high user input when printing.

In a long-established solution the paper was fed through a dedicated printer with a bespoke software application written to deliver the output requirement. The problem was that the hardware was reaching the end of its life and the print quality was deteriorating. Refurbishing was too expensive and replacements were no longer available.

"It's always a problem with bespoke application that if something goes wrong the cost of bringing the designer back in to rewrite the software rarely makes economic sense," said John O'Neill, National Accounts Manager at Ergo.

Ergo became involved after other vendors were unsuccessful in their attempts to resolve the problem. The difficulty was that the tracker paper perforations and the spokes of tracker printers are at half-inch increments, not a natural fit for an A4 sheet. Software adjustments failed to resolve the problem.



“What seemed initially like a high capital investment has brought a quick return and hugely improved the efficiency of our organisation around key print processes.”

The paper was constantly slipping, not loading properly and text was printed in the wrong place. Misalignment is unacceptable for pay slips and cheques where text has to precisely fit within pre-printed fields. With a warehouse full of sheets, procuring other paper wasn't an option.

For a year, two people in the Council's accounts department battled with the problem. They had to be on hand throughout each print run, wasting time that could have been spent more productively. Often they would have to take the tractors off and manually feed the paper through the printer.

#### **The Solution**

Having successfully completed a bespoke print solution for Wicklow County Council's Courts Service, Ergo was invited to come up with a solution. “In this instance we costed it and concluded that investing in a new printer that could be carefully reconfigured to meet the very specific requirements would give the Council a better return,” said O'Neill.

The solution was a continuous forms laser printer with a tractor feed device that that passes the paper into a standard laser printer roller. A combination of old and new technologies did the job.

The Ergo team configured the printer for the Council, calibrating and adjusting the alignment to ensure a continuous run of consistent quality. Macros were set up - printer commands and control codes that are stored in the hardware's memory - allowing instant access to the right configuration for each job. The new 'catch-all' printer supplied by Ergo was also big and robust enough to handle the volume and enabled Wicklow to print 87,000 polling cards far easier and with less user input than was previously possible.

#### **The Benefits**

As an ageing print solution came to the end of its life, Wicklow County Council had high volume print requirements that were too specialised for other vendors to solve. Ergo went out and sourced a printer that could handle the scope and scale of the jobs and then put in the time to calibrate and customise the machines. “Ergo, with their in-depth knowledge and expertise in printing, were able to provide us with a 'Best Fit' solution not only for our current needs, but to meet our needs into the future, when we hope to provide a Shared Printing Service to all Wicklow Local Authorities.”

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