

Building Information Modelling (BIM) - what it means for project information delivery

The future is BIM?

The Government has stated that by 2016 all public funded projects of more than £5m in value will be expected to use BIM at level 2; the Ministry of Justice is demanding that contractors demonstrate their ability to use BIM on all projects by 2013 through its new £2.5 billion frameworks. The fact is, many Clients are exploring the benefits of this new approach to building construction and management. So what does it mean and what impact will it have on construction supply chains?

At level 2 BIM demands a managed 3D environment, **with attached data**, that will contribute to both construction and post occupancy benefits. As such, the cornerstone of a BIM strategy will be the consistent delivery of asset linked project information, at the end of the construction phase, to support and manage on-going operational change.

Why do Clients want to adopt BIM

BIM can be adopted in a number of ways and simple modelling of a building in the design phase is the most basic example, and one which has been shown to yield a number of savings during construction. However, the major step being taken by Clients is in recognising that the majority of a building's life costs are related to its operation not to its construction. The key benefit BIM can offer a Client is in making available asset information to manage a building more efficiently after it is built.

Making BIM work for the Client

There is a fundamental change in approach needed by a construction supply chain delivering into a BIM environment, one which recognises a building as a set of managed assets. Whilst BIM offers a route to information that can link building assets to relevant documentation, this can only work if information is collected with this ultimate use in mind.

The effectiveness of a BIM system as a tool to manage building operations will depend on the quality of the information available. The need for complete information sets, delivered on time and in a consistent digital format, is paramount. Unstructured information, inconsistent formats and non-standardised presentation are all detrimental to a BIM deployment and a collection of paper manuals, or folder based electronic equivalents, does not support the BIM approach.

The **BIM Industry Working Group** made a number of key recommendations to the industry in support of the BIM initiative. Second on the list was that Clients and their main Contractors should:

“Be very specific with supply chain providers, they will only provide that which is asked for”.

The Group also recognised that:

“Difficulties arise when the need is to deliver a composite set of information from across the supply chain”.

How COGNICA can help support BIM projects

Long before BIM, Utility companies recognised that detailed, asset related information was necessary to effectively run their works. Through 14 years of working in the Utility sector, COGNICA has developed a range of web served templates specifically designed to collate end of project information at an asset level.

Whilst the requirement for good information may not be a new one, the need for an improved infrastructure to manage the needs of a BIM based development is and COGNICA already has the tools and experience to support the new regime.

COGNICA can provide an information collation system that will protect the integrity and security of asset information providing a robust audit trail. Furthermore, COGNICA’s system facilitates the accumulation of information through the project life cycle, allowing a more thorough management of the quality and quantity of information handed over.

The capability to deliver to a BIM requirement already exists at COGNICA and, for Utility projects, is being used every day.

Cost of meeting BIM requirements?

Information hand-over is an obligation for any construction project. A project with a BIM requirement is only different in the degree of specification of the information delivery. Inevitably any change in information requirements is likely to, at least temporarily, increase supply chain costs. However, in the scale of a construction project, the cost difference is minimal.

More significant to a Client is the cost of accepting badly structured documentation from a project and attempting to retrofit the information for inclusion in a BIM system. Getting it right first time will ultimately reduce project information costs.

Contact COGNICA

If you have a project to discuss where BIM has been specified, or would like further information on COGNICA’s services and experience, please contact Lisa Benge on 01793 864633 or email lisa.benge@cognica.com
