

# Birmingham City Council

## Mail solutions to the West Midlands

### THE CHALLENGE

**The mail market is changing; customers want more innovative solutions to managing their communications across multiple channels and platforms.**

Reducing costs while improving the way communications are delivered to customers; Hybrid Mail was the hot topic that everyone was talking about. Driven by commitment from a number of loyal customers Birmingham City Council's Central Mailing Operation undertook a yearlong detailed review of Hybrid Mail.

The review was extensive and detailed, including the software that drives the solution, hardware, industry production techniques, skills and innovations that could be imbedded into a new Hybrid Mail solution and full market and competitor analysis.

The Hybrid Mail solution would need to be WEB based so the solution could be deployed and imbedded into any customer without much IT involvement and therefore reducing the potential of substantial project costs.

In 2008, Birmingham City Council entered into a Wholesale agreement (DSA C9 Licence) with Royal Mail. This allowed the City following the procurement of a mail sorter; to pre-sort physical mail pieces for delivery into Royal Mail and provide the City with substantial savings.

Birmingham City Council is the only local authority to hold a DSA C9 licence with Royal Mail. Processing the City's mail through DSA provided the City with substantial savings when compared to Royal Mail's business mail and other retail products but also improved the delivery timelines of the mail.

Birmingham City Council started to offer the service to a number of public sector and local authorities shortly thereafter, physically collecting and processing customers sorted and unsorted mail at a competitive rate that other DSA Mail operators struggled to compete against. Birmingham City Council now has an extensive client list of public sector organisations and local authorities that it provides mailing services on behalf of.

### CLIENT PROFILE

Birmingham City Council works in partnership with other local government authorities and a number of local organisations to help support the 1.2 million residents of Birmingham and the wider community of the West Midlands Region.

Birmingham City Council's central mailing facility provides Mail and Document Solutions directly to an extensive client base within the public and private sector market.

Shared Services operates a centralised mail processing facility within Birmingham, which has a team of highly skilled mailing specialists to deliver outstanding quality solutions to customers.

### LOCATION

West Midlands, UK

### KEY TECHNOLOGY

- Pro C9110 Entrance Unit - 130PPM 4 Colour Press
- Fiery Workflows
- (KERN) K2500
- (KERN) K305
- (KERN) Lake Imaging
- Altodrive web to print software

### WEBSITE

[www.birmingham.gov.uk](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk)





“Not only have the staff at Altodigital been passionate and hardworking, but the price point of the products was good and we really feel that the company has provided excellent value for money.”

ROBERT LANCASTLE  
Project & Business  
Development Manager

## THE SOLUTION

Birmingham City Council took a collaborative approach, working closely with its chosen partner Altodigital on the project. Birmingham City Council was able to provide their expertise within the DSA mail market and vision of the Hybrid Mail requirements; Altodigital brought their vast print management and detailed project management expertise.

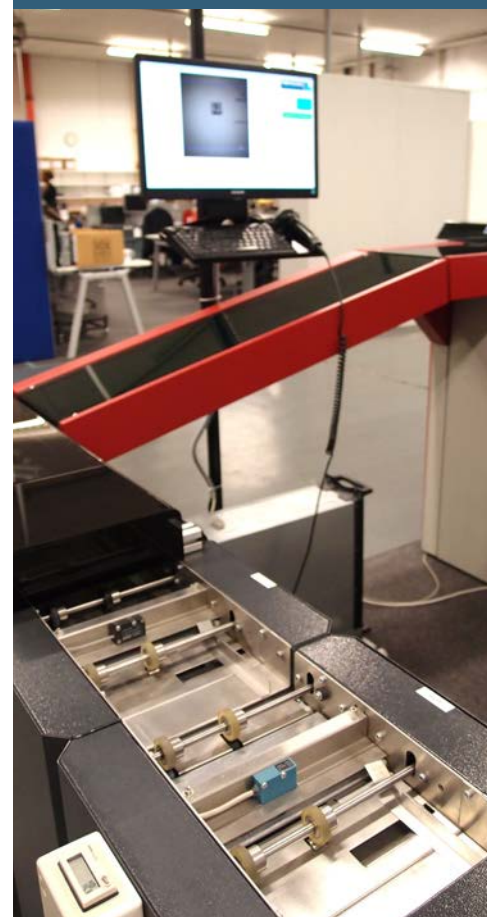
Birmingham City Council required a Web-to-print solution, working with Altodigital who provided the Altodrive: a Web-to-print solution that could cross handle communication channels, powerful enough to manage anything from a single letter to high-volume print mailings, all managed through one easy platform for the customers to use. This was in addition to four of the latest model Ricoh production printers and two Kern high-production mailers, fully equipped with Lake Camera and software validation to further increase reliability and functionality in such a fast-paced environment.

The Web-to-print solution is cloud-based; allowing Birmingham City Council to deploy the solution for their customers quickly with little or no IT involvement, thus reducing IT project costs and involvement. This was important as many of Birmingham City Council's clients do not own their own IT and rely on outsourced IT arrangements.

This solution offers full resilience and end-to-end page and mail piece integrity. Letters are mail sorted and a 2D matrix code is applied before it goes through the mailer. The mail is then read at entry point and inserted into an envelope, the camera reads the item on exit, which confirms it has been seen and inserted. Customers also have visibility of where the mail is in process, and there is a tracking facility through Royal Mail on a tray or batch level.

This is ground breaking for a local authority and DSA licence holder to bring to the commercial market a Web-to-print solution with automated work flow outputs.

Better managed communications utilising a combination of print/email and SMS to really drive forward improved customer engagement with key transactional and market messages with one easy, simple-to-use communication tool.





## THE SOLUTION (continued)

**Hybrid Mail will allow you, through consolidation of your communication channels to provide the desired output to customers in the key preferred channel.**

- Personalised Landing Page (PURL) – a bespoke PURL is created for the client, this will contain all required templates, batch processing, business rules which allow to better manage mailing dates, SMS and email communication.
- Process from a single letter to large mailings where you submit a file and template. The Client selects the required mailing date for the job to be completed.
- Web to print solution – little or no IT involvement required providing a low cost roll out across any organisation with rapid deployment.
- Mail piece address validation and mail sorting pre-production.
- 2D Data Matrix sequential codes utilised for mail piece cycle production, this ensures that each page is read at entry and exit points of mailing machines to provide page and mail piece integrity to provide you with the assurance that 100% of the mail is dispatched to the intended recipients 100% of the time via camera and software validation through the production cycle.
- Mail pieces damaged through the mailing process are not validated as a completed item and are automatically requested for reprint, detailed reporting will provide you with real time production confirmation on your letter or bulk mailing submission.
- Automated workflow solutions provide cutting edge technologies that provide client reassurance of total quality.
- Mail items are delivered directly by Royal Mail
- MI reporting with Mark Mail Royal Mail tracking through Royal Mail's mail centre processing.
- Site capacity via high production print and mailing machines.



## THE BENEFITS

The system is expected to bring about a wealth of benefits to the Council and its partners. Despite the fact that the technology is only in the earliest of stages, the Council has already seen a lot of interest from stakeholders – both internally and externally, and has received a wealth of positive feedback.

The concept has created an excellent pipeline for sales externally, providing an opportunity to bring the technology to market with key accounts.

Simon Cooper at Altodigital comments: “Here at Altodigital, we’re extremely proud to have been a part of the innovative new technology at such a large institution as Birmingham City Council.

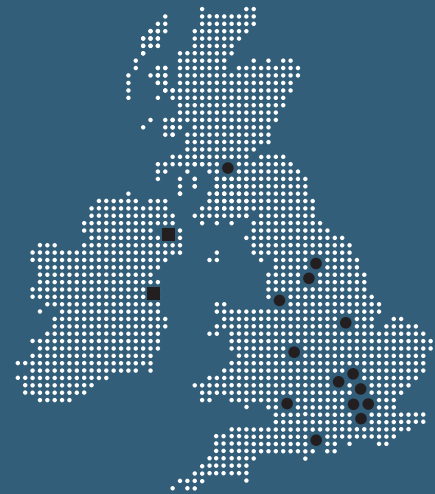
“We’ve really enjoyed helping BCC to implement the system, which will undoubtedly bring about huge benefits to the establishment, and we’re already really happy with the results at this early stage.”

Robert Lancaster, Project and Business Development Manager at Shared Services at Birmingham City Council said: “Altodigital has been fantastic to work with throughout the whole process, and the most commendable part of the service it has provided is, without a doubt, its staff. The account managers are extremely knowledgeable and it was obvious that they wanted to make the project a success as much as we did at Birmingham City Council.

“Ourselves and Altodigital worked hard together to develop a solution to suit both our organisation and the market. Not only have the staff at Altodigital been passionate and hardworking, but the price point of the products was good and we really feel that the company has provided excellent value for money. We’re all excited to see the benefits and results in the coming months.”

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Established for over 35 years, we have focused exclusively on providing unbeatable office technology solutions, and although we are a truly national operation, our success has been forged around our unique network of local offices providing on-the-spot response, rapport and reliability.



Altodigital has offices all over the country. Call us and see what we can do for your business.

To find out more about Altodigital telephone:

**0345 241 5444**

email:

[learnmore@altodigital.com](mailto:learnmore@altodigital.com)

or visit us at:

[www.altodigital.com](http://www.altodigital.com)

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

