



Breaking the eBilling Ceiling

by
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eBilling has been around for a long time, so why are most businesses still sending out mountains of paper bills and statements?

With few exceptions, all ERP, accounting software and mail-houses can produce a PDF bill. Internet access is no longer a constraint, and customers are increasingly web and email savvy.

No question that postal services are seeing an on-going decline in hard mail, but why are most businesses still sending the majority of their bills and statements by mail? According to the Billentis Report - eBilling Trends 2014, eBilling adoption in most developed economies remains between 15%-20%.

In some B2C & B2SME sectors, billers have driven print suppression to higher levels by charging for hard copy versions. This strategy is often linked to a “going green” claim, but in many cases, the result is simply a transfer of the print job to the end-customers who often feel a little resentful as they end up producing a hard copy anyway. Why? So they can put it in the folder with the other paper bills for processing at a later date. The overall “green score” hasn’t in fact changed.

In large value chains EDI is providing a true data-based transaction platform, but for most B2B operators, whether it arrives in hard copy or PDF, the payables process requires the invoice data to be re-keyed manually, or in larger organisations, the inbound paper and PDFs are driven through a scan and data extraction process for uploading.

So bills are being converted into paper and PDF formats at one end, only to be decoded at considerable cost for data entry at the other?

Then there’s the question of payment options. For consumers or small businesses wanting to pay an eBill, their ePayment options are usually limited to “Pay Now”. Most people don’t want to Pay Now when the bill arrives, they want to pay it when it’s due. So back to the bill folder for processing later on.

The issues above all start at the point of origin. The smarter approach is to produce an electronic bill that includes both the image plus associated data, and then make it interactive. The customer experience, for consumers and businesses, is significantly enhanced as a result of the high levels of functionality including:

- View Accounts – link to the Client Portal to manage all their accounts (B2B)
- Query – feedback about issues

- Export Data – for simply uploading to the payables system (B2C)
- Plan Payment – to auto load future dated payments, reference information, and the amount (B2C)
- Reminders – so they don't forget to pay you

Billentis predict that by 2020, pure image PDF billing will drop 40%, EDI will increase 20%, but the big growth will be in the Hybrid image plus data iBill.

The reason is simple. The convenience to both consumers and businesses is very high.

Results in NZ and Australia over the last 4 years have seen iBilling adoption by end customers reach between 60%-95% levels depending on industry sector, well above the traditional static PDF counterpart. The bill presentment cost savings are significant, and the resulting digital relationship becomes an enabler for low cost based AR management, dispute management, and reduced debtor days.

OfficeTorque FRM

OfficeTorque is a business services company specialising in Financial Relationship Management (FRM), a fresh new holistic approach to billing, accounts receivables management, and payment.

Visit: www.officetorque.com

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With a unique background that combines technology, economic development and business growth, Lance is now helping companies to leverage best of breed software solutions to better manage the financial relationship with their customers.