Edinburgh International Festival

Sector	Previous Finance System	Number of iplicit users	Go Live Date
Arts and Culture	**Sage 200**	**5 full users**	**June 2022**

Edinburgh International Festival saves time and enjoys better reporting with iplicit

Edinburgh International Festival – the world-famous celebration of music, theatre, opera and dance – runs its finance operations with iplicit after switching from Sage 200.

The festival began in 1947 and takes place over three weeks each August, using around eight venues for approximately 200 events.

It is a separate beast from the city's Fringe festival – and unlike that event, it is entirely curated by its organisers, who contract the artists and sell the tickets.

The International Festival employs 50 core staff year-round, rising to around 200 in the summer.

The festival no longer has to maintain **"old servers in the basement that are fast approaching the end of their operational life"**

> At the point when you're spending most of the money, that's when you more need accurate, up-to-date financial reporting, which is what iplicit now gives us. Budget holders can see their expenditure live in the system."

Andrew Brownlie
Head of Finance

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

Why change from Sage 200 to iplicit accounting software?

A new Director of Finance and Commercial, Susan McIntosh, joined just before lockdown and was keen to move the organisation on from Sage 200, its legacy finance system.

"Sage 200 is so inflexible and cumbersome to use. We wanted to change to something where the reporting could be so much more customisable and flexible and easy to use. And we wanted better project reporting around our productions, to try and report on costs a bit better." says **Andrew Brownlie, Head of Finance.**

The team looked at all the high-profile products, including NetSuite ("too complex and very expensive"), Dynamics, Intacct (both also "quite expensive" with functionality that didn't impress), and Access before deciding upon iplicit.

iplicit scored for its simplicity and flexibility and the fact that it was designed for the cloud, whereas Access "felt very much like their previous Access server product that has just been refreshed and moved to the cloud".

> ❝
> We've been happy to recommend iplicit to other people who are looking at it. I'm more than happy to say that I think iplicit is a good option that they should be considering"
>
> **Andrew Brownlie**
> Head of Finance

How iplicit met Edinburgh International Festival's needs

While Edinburgh International Festival has an annual turnover of around £12m-£13m, around three-quarters of that is spent in three months of the year.

The day-to-day demands on the finance system include bank transactions, purchase orders and invoicing. Grant funding comes in large lumps, while ticket sales are handled in a separate system and added to the journal at month-end.

The team put through regular payroll journals. For five or six months of the year, there is a weekly payroll to handle as well as a monthly one.

The biggest challenge was to make valuable, real-time finance information readily available early. Most parts of the organisation spend almost none of their budget until the summer.

iplicit's project reporting features allow the finance team to better see the spending associated with each production in the festival.

"We can pull that information out early enough now to be usable. Otherwise, when everyone's so frantic trying to deliver the festival, getting them to pay any attention to it is difficult," says Andrew.

"At the point when you're spending most of the money, that's when you more need accurate, up-to-date financial reporting, which is what iplicit now gives us. Budget holders can see their expenditure live in the system."

bank reconciliation is
**"phenomenally easier
and quicker."**
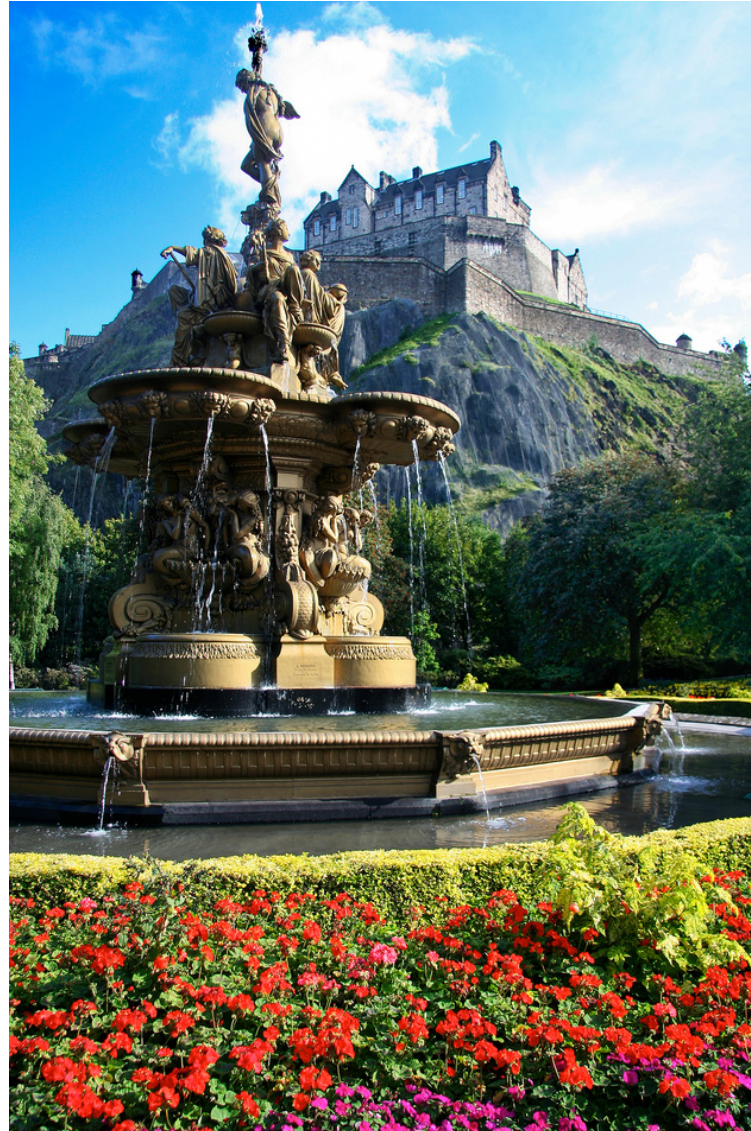
Time savings with iplicit

iplicit's automation features alone save around two days' worth of work each month. Payment runs can be done in a fraction of the time they took previously, while bank reconciliation is "phenomenally easier and quicker", says Andrew.

The festival no longer no longer has to maintain "old servers in the basement that are fast approaching the end of their operational life", while the move to the cloud has made remote access much easier and no longer requires using a temperamental remote desktop connection.

The festival needs to be able to tell funders and stakeholders how much of its spending goes into Edinburgh's economy, how much to Scotland's, and how much to the wider UK and the rest of the world. This would previously have involved a laborious trawl through Sage, but now can be done easily.

The system saved time again at year-end and at audit time.

Data transferred in from Sage was available to auditors' satisfaction. And with invoices and workflows all stored in iplicit, auditors could be given access to inspect anything they needed to see and to raise reports.

"

Sage 200 is so inflexible and it was inflexible and cumbersome to use. We wanted to change to something where the reporting could be so much more customisable and flexible and easy to use. And we wanted better project reporting around our productions, to try and report on costs a bit better."

Andrew Brownlie
Head of Finance

"We've been **happy to recommend iplicit** to other people who are looking at it."

Favourite features

The easy importing of credit card data from RBS has saved the organisation's credit card holders time every month on submitting expenses.

Instead of requiring people to file claims manually, the system generates a draft claim to which they add receipts. The ease of the process was an early way to show people how much time could be saved across the organisation with the new system.

Better visibility through reporting

When the organisation reviews a festival after it is over, iplicit makes it easier to see how each event and venue performed. "We pull out some of that information and use it to try and inform some of the programming decisions for the next year," says Andrew.

"We can have a coherent conversation about it, using numbers that we are confident in. That will really help us in years going forward as we build up that history. That was one of the key reasons for the switch to iplicit.

"We've been happy to recommend iplicit to other people who are looking at it. I'm more than happy to say that I think iplicit is a good option that they should be considering," he adds.

Accounting software for performing arts sector

Performing arts organisations use our modern, true-cloud accounts software to streamline financial processes and gain complete financial visibility of their productions. Often involving a nonprofit entity, iplicit has their multi-entity and nonprofit accounting and reporting needs covered.

True-cloud accounting software without the sky-high pricing. iplicit is the award-winning accounting solution that pays for itself.

With iplicit's automation tools you can close month end fast and with unlimited reporting dimensions, get critical insights quickly.

FIND OUT MORE