



Property Owner Case Study

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We have had the Propman property management system from Grosvenor Systems for about seven years. It replaced a system of Excel spreadsheets which we had been using for a long time, but which we knew was not sophisticated or reliable enough to meet our needs.

Our principal use of Propman is to collect rents on the properties owned by the University of Cambridge, some of which are residential, some commercial, (including hotels and pubs). On the residential side we have about 200 flats although the number will soon double as building is completed on a new residential block. Rent is billed monthly and Propman produces all rent invoices and records all lease and rental information.

We have always seen Propman very much as an accounting system, and it was installed on this basis. It performs the accounting functions we use it for very well. It is particularly good at controlling arrears, calculating the interest on late payments, which is then added to the next bill. Propman integrates to some extent with our Oracle central accounting system, but we currently keep the main accounting system separate. One of the things we are planning is to use Propman to collect rents by Direct Debit. If the majority of our tenants were paying by Direct Debit it would be a huge advantage for us.

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Recently we have had more interest from the Surveying Department where staff are exploring Propman’s functionality in more depth with a view to becoming the system’s owners. Surveyors would use the system as a Terrier and they could also make extensive use of the Diary function to produce rent review reminders and lease renewal notices. Propman would replace the paper-based system they currently use.

Cambridge University has a big estate and, as well as Propman, we have three other systems which are used for maintenance management and space planning.

We are beginning to re-evaluate the functionality of our systems with a view to rationalising the number we have in place. We need to establish where functionality overlaps and where one system could do the job of another.

Ideally we would like to be able to use just one, possibly two systems, to do all our property and facilities management, although achieving this will probably take us a couple of years.

People have woken up to how expensive it is to own property and are making increasing demands for more detailed information about the property portfolio. Having a flexible, easy-to-use system is very important and Propman fulfils these criteria. The system is well supported by Grosvenor and we see Propman as being one of our main systems and plan to extend and develop our use of it.