

# Take-off

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## Marion Hitchcock inspects the findings of a recent BIM adoption survey

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The [2017 National Building Specification](#) (NBS) survey of building information modelling (BIM) reports an 8% increase in the use of the technology in the past year ? at 62%, up from 54% in the 2016 survey. This is the highest leap since 2014. This is perhaps an indication that the government?s BIM Level 2 mandate, which came into play in April 2016, has increased BIM adoption in the UK. The mandate was introduced to support the government?s construction strategy, and one of its objective is to reduce cost across project life cycles.

The NBS survey respondents who have yet to adopt BIM declare that one of the reasons for this is a lack of client demand. This aligns with our experience that the private sector has not adopted BIM to anywhere near the same extent as government-funded projects, even though 70% of the NBS survey respondents believe that BIM helps reduce costs, 60% that it saves time and 65% that it can bring significant benefits in the operation and maintenance (O&M) stage. According to 72% of the participants, clients do not understand the benefits of BIM ? and this includes government departments that are failing to enforce their own mandate. Our experience also indicates that clients often believe that BIM adds more cost than it does value.

The advantages of using BIM in the design and construction process are well documented ? for example, with regard to visualisation and clash detection. For this reason, it is perhaps expected that design consultants and contractors will drive the BIM process. Anecdotal feedback we have received is that adoption of BIM by cost consultants is slower than in other practice areas. We would argue that there are many benefits for cost consultants in adopting BIM and upskilling, some of which are set out below.

### Cost consulting

Given the nature of its role in bringing a project in on budget and projecting lifecycle costs beyond the construction phase, a cost consultant is ideally placed to quantify the savings clients can make by adopting BIM. Where clients build and hold on to an asset, a significant proportion of its costs may be incurred in the facilities management (FM) stage. However, FM issues tend not to be addressed early enough limiting the relevance of the building information model for O&M purposes, thereby reducing the benefit of BIM adoption to the client. In quantifying the cost savings of adoption across the project lifecycle and encouraging the client to ensure the information requirements are aligned with the client?s output needs, the cost consultant would be able to assist the client to gain maximum benefit from BIM.

One advantage for a cost consultant of being involved early in a project and having experience in BIM is that they would be able to influence project information requirements and align the model detail with [NRM 1](#) to achieve optimal data for their needs across the whole project lifecycle. In addition, the embedded quantities and cost information is automatically updated to reflect design changes, facilitating the efficiency of the quantity surveyor?s role and the accuracy of the data.

Given that BIM tends to require, or encourage, increased collaboration in the project team, lead designers tell us that there is an advantage in appointing a professional team with a record of being able to work together. Thus the cost consultant is able to influence BIM take-up by clients and has the opportunity to become embedded in project teams.

Numerous sources, for example, research by the University of Salford, reassure cost consultants that digitisation of the project information supports rather than lessens their role. There needs to be professional analysis of the data that goes into the model in order to generate the required output. The cost consultant understands project-specific needs and BIM enhances the value the cost consultant is able to provide to the client by generating more complete and accurate data on which to base their assumptions and recommendations. In addition, alongside BIM's benefits are issues of data integrity and software interoperability that mean quantities still need to be verified. Finally, BIM allows for cross-project data analysis, which is not easy when using other sources, saving costs for the client. Perhaps there is a role to develop here for cost consultants?

The industry may be digitising at different speeds, but 78% of the NBS survey respondents state that they see BIM as the future of project information. So why not be at the forefront?

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### **Further information**

- Related competencies include [Building information modelling \(BIM\) management](#) , [Data management](#)
- This feature is taken from the [RICS Construction journal](#) (November/December 2017)
- Related categories: [BIM](#)