

News Release

TECSPEC - a NEW user-friendly electronic literature system for the Building Sector

Many component manufacturers in the building sector do not realise there is a British Standard to help with the design of technical literature – BS4940 1994 - Technical information on construction products and services. The Standard comes in three parts: Part 1 - Guide for managers, Part 2 - Guide to content and arrangement and Part 3 - Guide to presentation. Part 3 recommends page formats, how to layout product information in a clear and concise way including typeface selection and recommended point sizes. It also suggests how to subdivide and index literature, various binding, distribution and storage methods. TECSPEC's e-literature system uses the principles of BS 4940 to provide information in an electronic format.

Jeff Arden of TECSPEC explains why the company's e-literature system is such a good idea for building component manufacturers and specifiers alike.

Architects, engineers and others who specify building products, in the main, prefer to have technical information in a digital format rather than hardcopy publications. Hardcopy technical literature libraries are time consuming to manage and take-up too much expensive office space. There are also the substantial environmental and financial costs placed on component manufactures for printing and distribution. The many disadvantages of distributing hardcopy literature has resulted in component manufacturers abandoning the costly use of ring binders with tabbed dividers for their literature sets. Many instead now relying on digital PDF documents to distribute the bulk of their technical data to the sector via the internet. Indeed there are now many internet library websites where literature can be easily accessed by specifiers. Although this trend of using PDFs, is a cheaper way of distributing literature, is not so use-friendly as you may think. Where a manufacturer's literature comprises of many, two or four page data sheets in the PDF format, specifiers must open each document separately making it difficult to cross reference information from one manufacturer. At least in a ring binder Technical Manual with tabbed divider leaves the user can quickly turn to another section or data sheet.

Many of the recommendations enshrined in BS 4940 are still relevant today. It would be a mistake not to take note of the Standard when designing a technical literature set - it's just that the method of re-producing and distributing technical information has become out-of-date.

TECSPEC specialise in providing the equivalent of hardcopy Technical Catalogues but in an electronic format.

Based on digital page-turner software, TECSPEC electronic technical literature sets are expressly formatted for component manufacturers in the BUILDING SECTOR. Featuring a digital microfiche mode they are high definition and user-friendly as individual data sheet pages can be quickly accessed within the same publication. Electronic catalogues (e-catalogues) can be created allowing the distribution of complete sets of information, comprising a number of data sheets, as one easy-to-use publication.

TECSPEC electronic publications are simply incorporated into websites and onto CD presentations, potentially saving £000s from a company's literature budget by reducing hardcopy printing, processing and postage costs. Design guidance is offered to manufacturers wishing to use the system to ensure their literature optimises the benefits of this cost-saving, environmentally friendly, electronic publication system.

The “Green” option for Technical Literature

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) currently accounts for 3-4% of the world's carbon emissions and 10% of the UK's energy bill. With a carbon footprint now equal to the aviation industry, ICT, and how businesses utilise ICT, is increasingly coming under the spotlight as governments seek to achieve carbon-cutting commitments. Eco Hosting aims to counter this trend by planting trees to offset carbon footprint.

The servers that support the TECSPEC subscribe to Eco Hosting. The server company carefully calculates their carbon emissions to ensure significantly more carbon is absorbed by sponsored trees planted in the Ransom Wood Business Park, Nottinghamshire.

To date the company have planted more trees than required - currently the trees absorb three times the carbon produced by the servers.

The dual server hardware used by TECSPEC is a RAID 1 configuration so all web data is saved on two drives. The drives themselves are SMART monitored and are hot swappable - giving peace of mind that if a hard drive fails there is a second copy drive that will take over until the failed hard drive is replaced – this ensures data is always available on-line.

Building sector companies that have TECSPEC electronic publications can be confident that not only are they getting an ultra-reliable, highly functional service, they are also helping to cut their carbon footprint.

Building component manufacturers wishing to discover more about the TECSPEC electronic literature system should go to www.tecspec.eu

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TECSPEC
3D TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION PAGeturnERS

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