Why Aspose is Not A Direct Competitor of Windward
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What Aspose Does:

Aspose excels at file conversion. With Aspose, it is possible to take any static display file format (documents, images, and text), structure it with other formats, and output the result to pretty much every existing format. This means that one could take this word document, an ebook (EPUB), and xml table and merge them into a single document that one could then save as a PDF. Aspose can be used to generate documents without the help of Word or Excel.

Aspose's primary products include Aspose Word and Aspose Cells, which are designed to manage the creation of documents and tables. Aspose has a separate product for PDF management. Aspose has used its system to provide a variety of tools for specific applications, such as task management software (Aspose Tasks), email processing (Aspose Email), slide presentation (Aspose Slides), and barcode generation (Aspose Barcode). Aspose's products integrate with Java and .Net and provide functions and do not contain interfaces of their own.

Saaspose is Aspose's cloud based solution. Saaspose connects to a wide variety of web and mobile services such as Salesforce, Google Apps, Apple Development, Facebook, and Amazon Web Services and allows users to extract text and images from documents as well as convert documents to other file formats.

Why Aspose Is Commonly Confused as Reporting Software:

There are many keywords that are used to describe both Aspose and reporting software such as document generation and data merging. Under "common uses" on Aspose's product page, "Generate reports using mail merge" is featured, which can give the impression that it is a full reporting solution when all this feature does is transfer cells from a data source to a document. It even provides a demo in which a data source is called (below) and used to create a report.

http://www.aspose.com/demos/.net-components/aspose.words/csharp/general/dinner-invitation.aspx

Aspose can draw from data sources and has limited formatting functions available, so as seen above, data can be taken from one file and placed into another for very simple reporting functions. This usually will not satisfy the demands of companies looking for reporting software because the data cannot be Aspose has no tools for data management and formatting. Aspose also provides tools that are potentially useful for use with reporting software, such as barcode generation, form completion, and email generation. Aspose is commonly purchased alongside SSRS and Jaspersoft, which it has support for.

The Difference Between Aspose and Reporting Software:

The most important difference between Aspose and reporting software is that reporting software provides tools for managing data. Aspose claims that it can "mail merge" data, but this refers to the ability to take a data file and place it into a document. This does not include data filtering or analytic tools. Because Aspose does not have any data management features, data that is converted to a new document from Aspose must be filtered separately. In other words, unless you want to report a table that looks the same as it does in the data source it came from, Aspose can't help.

Along with the inability to manage data, Aspose is weak when it comes to document formatting. Most reporting software has interactive designers, and with Aspose, documents have to be designed and laid out directly through code. Aspose doesn't include any tools that come standard with reporting software, such as data visualization tools and report scheduling. If Aspose is used without Jasper or SSRS to create reports, most of the reporting functions have to be coded on their own, which is highly inconvenient.

Generating a Report: Windward vs Aspose

	Data Sourcing	Merging, Formatting	Conversion	Report
Windward	DataSourceWizard SORCERER	engine javelin autotag	Output HTML PDF Printer DOCX	PDF Adobe / Excel / Word / PowerPoint
ASPOSE	Aspose	Aspose for Jaspersoft — JASPERSOFT / Aspose.Words for SSRS — Microsoft SQL Server / Aspose.Words for .NET Aspose.Words for Java — CODE	Aspose	RTF / HTML / XML

Why Aspose is Purchased Legitimately for Reporting Needs

For reporting, Aspose has a number of tools that can potentially help those who currently have solutions for merging and formatting data.

Data Conversion   Barcode Management   E-mail Management   Text Extraction

Data Conversion
As stated earlier, Aspose can connect with Jasper and SSRS. Unlike Windward, Jasper and SSRS do not have options for creating Excel Reports. By using Aspose, reports created with SSRS can be exported to Excel file formats. Aspose not only can convert reports to PowerPoint slides, but import slides as image files for use in report design as well. Aspose can convert reports to PDF files and assist with managing the table of contents as well as headers/footers of the PDF files it produces.

Barcode/QR code Management*
By adding in barcode solutions from Aspose, businesses can generate reports that include barcodes from pieces of data. Aspose's solution allows data sources containing barcodes to be converted to product ID's when creating a report and vice versa. In addition, QR codes in data sources can be converted to text and vice versa, allowing web addresses to be both displayed and encoded in reports.

Email Management
Aspose's email solutions allow generated reports to be automatically sent to databases of recipients.

Text Extraction*
Aspose offers a tool that can be used to extract text from images. This can be very helpful for firms that have databases of images because they now can organize and manipulate this information (ex. License plates). This tool can also distinguish fonts of data.

The Disadvantages of 'Building Your Own'

For firms that currently have reporting solutions or those considering Jasper Reports or SSRS, Aspose may be useful. However, Aspose only offers a portion of what is needed to build a reporting solution from scratch, and because of this, Windward should not lose competitors to Aspose alone. There may be firms that don't want to purchase reporting solutions, but for the following reasons building reporting software from scratch is unlikely to be in their best interests.

Lower Quality
Reporting software companies typically employ many developers and spend many years touching upon and improving their products. It is very unlikely that a firm could create a solution anywhere near the quality of current reporting offerings available, especially without spending more and contributing much more time.

Lack of Support
Although a programmer might have a good sense as to how to go about creating reporting software for a firm, there are certain tools that a developer may not be able to integrate. When this happens, there aren't many sources of information that the developer can turn to fix this. There may be forums built by others trying to solve the same problem, but there is no organization supporting the software to provide tutorials and one-to-one help.
In addition, the firm designing the software must implement any updates to the reporting software. If a firm is able to create the exact same solution as Autotag for report generation, it will run into problems when everyone using it relies on a newer, unsupported version of Microsoft Office. While reporting software companies make a commitment to regularly fixing bugs and looking for innovative

solutions, firms will probably struggle maintaining the solution that has been created.

<u>Developer Follow-through Required</u>
　　　　In the event that a developer for a firm is able to generate a working reporting software, that developer must create documentation and support for the software. Even if the developer is able to train the employees currently working for the firm, there will be new employees and if the original developer retires or leaves the company, it is very risky to rely on software that no one knows how to fix.

Takeaways:

-Aspose is meant for converting a wide variety of file formats and creating documents without the use of Word or Excel.
-Aspose keeps data static. It does not provide tools for filtering and manipulating data drawn from sources.
-When Aspose speaks of *data merging,* it does not refer to data manipulation but rather the inclusion of data in a document.
-It is highly inconvenient to design reports with Aspose, as it does not include a designer of its own.
-Aspose can be used to assist SSRS and Jaspersoft by providing more options for outputting reports.
-Aspose does not have data visualization tools or other standard features of report software.
-Building a reporting solution to accompany Aspose is inefficient, costly, lacks support, requires developer follow-through, and is unlikely to match the quality of existing reporting solutions.

*Potential suggestions for Windward products? (barcode, text extraction)