A Comparison of SSRS & Windward

If you're working with SQL, then be aware that you have several options for your reporting and document generation component. The Windward Solution and SSRS are two of the more popular choices. Windward's product team created this comparison to help you understand the merits of both.

Over its history, SSRS has demonstrated a singular superpower: it can take relatively simple concepts and drown them in needless complexity. You can see this in the way SSRS makes you dive through sub menus and attribute fields when all you want to do is simply bold some text. Or that it still doesn't allow you to assemble reports that could contain landscape- AND portrait-oriented pages in the same final document.

While SSRS does include useful ideas (Tablix, Expression Editor, integrating Dundas charting, MAPs, indicators, etc…), it has an ongoing reputation for poor implementation of these ideas. A process that should be intuitive and simple becomes a multi-step wizard that leaves you with a report template that you can't even modify. Sure, you can take the road less traveled with SSRS and have an "adventurous journey," but we all know how that ends: wasted time and lost energy.

Windward takes the reporting road most traveled. It optimizes the experience of your team through the use of data wizards, drag and drop functionality, Microsoft® Office as a template designer, and more. The table below provides an overview of the two products on a selection of key features.

Product Comparison Table

FEATURE	SSRS	WINDWARD
Data Source Connectivity	Supports major SQL based, ODBC/OleDB and XML based data sources	All SSRS supported data sources plus • File Based (XML, XLSX, Access) • Web Based (Salesforce, JSON, REST) • Big Data (MongoDB, Cassandra) • Continued support of emerging data sources
Customization	Simple tables, cumbersome menus to make simple changes like fonts, charts colors, page numbering	Free form design allows users to intuitively make layout and formatting changes in Office a tool they know. Create modern looking reports that impress clients
Backwards Compatibility	No compatibility for templates between versions. Conversion tool is mandatory	Templates are compatible with older versions and platforms (.NET or Java). Tags are automatically upgraded on first run.
Open Formats	Proprietary RDL templates, must have designer installed for any change	Templates and Output created to specifications allowing editing in native applications. Open Office and make layout changes at any time.

FEATURE	SSRS	WINDWARD
Data Selection	Wizards only available for tables and matrices	Drag/Drop Intuitive SQL, XPath and OData wizards make selecting data as easy as creating an email filter
Component Reuse	Shared data connections and report parts (charts, tables) components can't be combined in a single object	PODs feature lets you capture data sources, tags, text, charts or any combination of each, even entire documents
Price	**Local Deployment** - Included with Microsoft SQL Server cost **Cloud deployment** – 30 reports/hour = ~$199/month	**AutoTag Standalone** - $995.00 **Windward Solution** starts at around $10K
Learning Curve	Must know how to write SQL and learn new designer for layout	Easily design template in tools you know through the Microsoft Office Suite, create tags with drag and drop design/wizards

Summary

Windward offers convenience and a host of ease-of-use features unavailable to SSRS users. With Windward, you can:

- **Free your templates from formatting restrictions.**
  Use Office's styles, charts, tables, shapes, and more to add life and clarity to your documents.
- **Link to a wider variety of data connections.**
  Windward's ever-expanding library of data connectivity makes sure you can access your data even as storage mediums change.
- **Report as you should: directly in the native Microsoft application.**
  Windward produces your document to spec so you can continue working with your documents even after generation.
- **Select your data in a single step through intuitive wizards.**
  Don't struggle getting data into your reports: let Windward's drag and drop wizards do the heavy lifting for you.
- **Combine tags, styles and formatting all in reusable components**.
  Windward's PODs feature allows capture of data sources, tags, text, charts or any combination of each, even entire documents.

Try Windward Today!

Visit www.windward.com and **download a free, 14-day trial** or **schedule a live, personal demo**.