

How to Choose IPS Software in 2026

How to Choose IPS Software in 2026

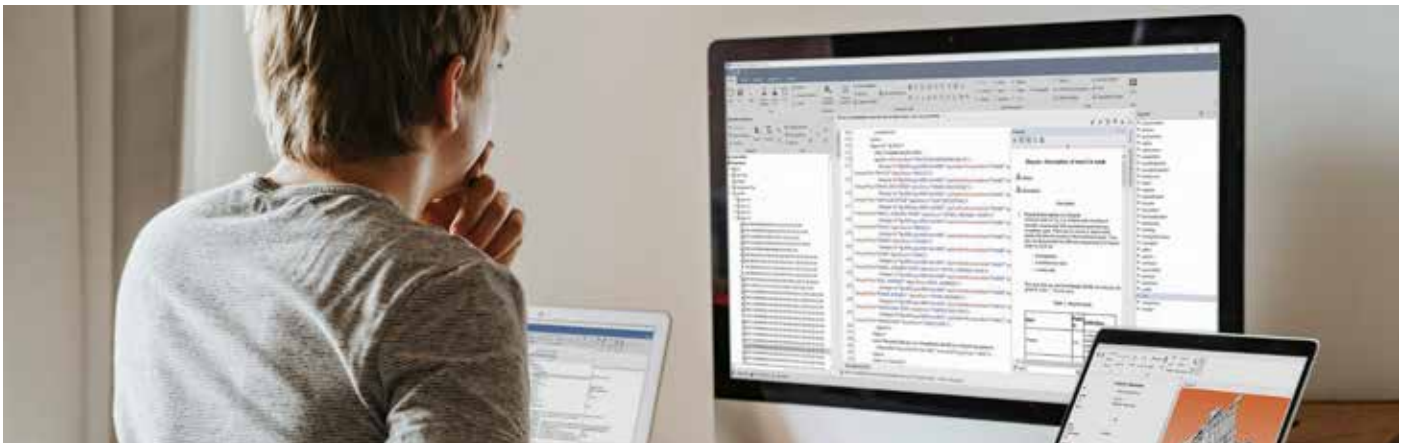
By Mark Willis, Global Head of Integrated Product Support,
and Kara Shaw, Principal ILS Engineer

Integrated product support is central for the effective delivery of defence and aerospace programmes.

As platforms become more complex, organisations need IPS software that connects logistics support, cost modelling, technical publications, and sustainment data inside a single governed environment. In 2026, modern platforms generate large volumes of logistics, supportability, maintenance, cost, configuration, and operational data. Managing that complexity with disconnected spreadsheets and siloed tools is no longer sustainable or safe.

Industry frameworks such as the S-Series IPS specifications and SAE standards continue to reinforce the need for IPS across the asset lifecycle.

This article explains how to evaluate IPS software platforms and looks at what capabilities matter most for long-term programme success.



Why IPS Matters in 2026

Integrated product support frameworks are designed to improve readiness and lifecycle cost effectiveness through coordinated support planning, analysis and data management.

Defence acquisition programmes face growing pressure to use the digital environment and support tools to:

- reduce total ownership costs
- improve asset availability
- accelerate supportability analysis
- maintain digital traceability
- facilitate multinational collaboration
- integrate engineering and sustainment data

However, many organisations still operate with fragmented toolsets, standalone LSA software, disconnected support systems and life cycle cost analysis models, isolated IPS authoring systems, duplicate support databases and manual data imports and exports. These disconnected environments often create data inconsistency, governance risk, and unnecessary programme delays.

What to Look for in IPS Software in 2026

- Comprehensive LSA Capability
- Integrated Life Cycle Cost, Sensitivity and Trade-off Analysis
- Incorporated IPS Authoring and Technical Publications Functionality
- Single Database System supporting multiple data specifications/standards

The best IPS software platforms now combine these functions into a unified support database architecture rather than standalone separate tools.

One of the biggest differentiators in 2026 is support database integration. A true integrated product support platform uses a single (source of truth) database environment to improve data governance, configuration control, traceability, modelling and reporting accuracy.

For example, life cycle cost analysis should link directly to maintenance data, failure rates, sparing analysis and workforce requirements, to allow teams to assess the cost impact of sustainment decisions in real time instead of relying on disconnected spreadsheets.

Alignment with S1000D and wider S-Series standards is increasingly important for defence programmes; however, different global regions may have different data requirements. The ability to seamlessly move from one specification or standard to another whilst being able to verify and correct the data content is pivotal in the cost-effective delivery of multi-national programmes.



Questions to Ask Vendors

Before selecting an IPS software platform, ask:

- Can the toolset use multiple LSA standards and specifications?
- Is all IPS data managed in one environment?
- Does the toolset operate in an “enter once, use many times” environment?
- Are the LSA and life cycle cost analysis fully connected?
- Are the business decision outputs easily created and understood?
- Are alternative support scenarios easily created and cost benefits visible?
- Can technical publications consume live support data?
- How are engineering changes controlled?
- Is data duplicated across modules?

If integration depends on spreadsheets or manual synchronisation, the platform may create long-term sustainment risk.

Common Selection Mistakes

Multiple databases – The modern approach is for a single integrated database not the historic multiple tools supported by multiple databases approach. The modern approach takes less time to reach production and costs less.

Buying multiple tools from multiple vendors – increasing complexity, cost and vendor management overheads.

Prioritising Compliance Alone – Standards compliance matters, but usability and workflow efficiency are equally important.

Ignoring Scalability – IPS software should support long programme lifecycles, multinational collaboration, secure deployments and evolving standards.

Usability – IPS tools should be easy to use with straightforward decision outputs.

Multiple input requirements – Data should be entered once and used many times.



Final Thoughts

For defence and aerospace organisations, choosing the right integrated product support platform is now a strategic decision that directly affects readiness, availability, through-life cost performance and programme agility for decades. Choosing IPS software in 2026 is no longer just a procurement exercise.

The most effective solutions combine all capability (LSA, support modelling and analysis, life cycle cost analysis, authoring and publishing) inside a single, governed digital environment.

