



Gerald D. Cohen,
President and CEO
Information Builders

By Gerald Cohen

The Expanding Scope of Business

Delivering Rich BI Functionality to Organizations on a Budget

According to a CIO survey conducted by Morgan Stanley in June 2008, business intelligence (BI) is the second most important category of software. It helps organizations drive value from IT investments in tangible ways, like making business processes more efficient and information-management processes less complicated.

Unfortunately, not everyone is getting the full value out of their BI investments. Of 400 companies surveyed by *InformationWeek* last year, 25 percent of respondents said that BI failed to improve business performance.

One reason BI initiatives fail is that companies have difficulty identifying applications that impact large populations of users. Savvy CIOs don't stop with traditional reporting and analysis. They know

that, in many cases, the greatest ROI is achieved with applications that touch lots of operational users.

This article is about how to identify and reach BI users in new ways – and how to get maximum value out of BI initiatives. As the scope of business intelligence expands, it extends beyond dashboards, OLAP, and report distribution to incorporate search, predictive analytics, electronic publishing, performance management, and mobile BI.

Information Builders is at the forefront of this expansion, and we're continually adding new components to WebFOCUS that bolster essential BI capabilities without the need to buy add-on products. By adhering to standards and leveraging open source software, we're helping customers create BI applications that are pervasive, inexpensive, and easy



Intelligence

to deploy. Some of the products we enable include the following:

- Tomcat Java Application Server (free with every copy of WebFOCUS)
- Lucene search engine (embedded in Magnify)
- Adobe Flex (incorporated with WebFOCUS Flex Enable)
- Google Maps (for basic geographic needs)
- Financial reports (using XBRL)
- R statistics (for predictive analytics)
- Performance Management Framework (for integrated performance management)

Core Business Intelligence

Most of the major business intelligence companies offer core BI functionality to one degree or another. Information Builders is expanding its core BI functionality

in innovative ways to offer BI capabilities to a new class of user. Our extended BI platform reaches beyond traditional reporting to include search, predictive analytics, electronic publishing, performance management, and mobile distribution – all via one integrated environment. The cost and time savings are dramatic. For example, in predictive analytics, it is estimated that 60 percent of the cost of a project is in assembling the training data needed to build the statistical model. Our integrated BI product dramatically reduces this cost by enabling developers to build predictive models and deploy them in Web-based applications to any worker in the organization, along with associated reports.

Searching the Enterprise

Search engines index HTML pages to categorize content and help users find information. Enterprise search

is different. When database records and ERP transactions are indexed, there are no pages to display results – unless you have a tool like WebFOCUS Magnify to create results pages that users can view. Magnify bridges the gap between search and BI by combining the power of state-of-the-art search, BI, and integration technologies. It lets companies tap into enterprise records and empowers more users to leverage critical information.

By enabling users to easily locate facts through simple keyword searches, organizations can realize significant productivity gains and enhance decision-making across the enterprise. As Erlanger, Kentucky Police Department learned, Magnify compiles structured and unstructured data into the universally known and easy-to-use Google search paradigm.

Erlanger gathers information across city and agency boundaries and presents that information in two useful ways: via a powerful search engine that enables officers to run queries from their patrol cars, and through a BI portal that displays key performance indicators (KPIs) of current crime activity to supervisors at headquarters. Officers have a valuable tool to help them make arrests and apprehend criminals, while supervisors can make decisions about how and where to deploy the force. By extending BI to new types of individuals, this system boosts productivity and ensures more effective protection of Erlanger's citizens.

Making Predictions

Predictive analytics takes past data and uses statistical methods to create projections about the future. Until recently, delivering predictive applications to end users required



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robust add-on capabilities for data access, data modeling, and application building. Data mining was largely excluded from mainstream BI applications and prediction was very rarely part of the daily operations of field workers.

As the scope of business intelligence expands, every decision-maker can benefit from predictive modeling applications. Embedding predictive models within WebFOCUS applications extends their usefulness tremendously. We've accomplished this with WebFOCUS RStat, a statistical modeling workbench that allows data miners and BI developers to work collaboratively to access, manipulate, and transform data.

With help from RStat, users gain accurate, verifiable information instead of relying on hunches and intuition. For example, insurance underwriters can benchmark the cost of a policy against demographic and actuarial information – important

variables that help them quantify risk. Law enforcement personnel can use predictive modeling tools to compare crime expectations against predictions based on past crime data, helping them to deploy resources more effectively.

Adding Visual Appeal

Information has to be presented in a visually appealing way to create a compelling experience for users. Now, BI developers can devise rich Internet applications by combining the strength of WebFOCUS with Adobe Flex to create animated analytic dashboards. As New York Public Library (NYPL) learned, Information Builders Adobe Flex Builder creates Web 2.0-style dashboards that jump off the screen with advanced interactivity, animation, and visualization techniques.

NYPL developed a BI solution called MOD (Metric On Demand) to deliver information about

operating costs, visitor traffic patterns, asset acquisition, and inventory to supervisors at 91 locations. In the face of drastic budget cuts, this information is invaluable since it enables the library to avoid making cuts to the services that are most in demand.

In a related area, WebFOCUS Print Ready Reporting technology makes it easier for people to focus on relevant details, follow trends, and transform dry facts into a lively presentation. Petrobras, Brazil's largest oil and gas company, used this technology to create a 200-page report book for its Mining and Energy Ministry. Executives use the reporting system during board meetings to display pixel-perfect PDFs on a screen six meters wide. They can refresh the book in just 90 seconds – all 274 reports, 627 graphs, 696 layout pages, and 1,597 objects.

Going Mobile

Another way to expand BI initiatives is to untether users from the network. Whether delivered to a user's desktop or a mobile device, WebFOCUS Active Reports permits an embedded analytical engine to be used for offline analysis. These highly portable displays are easy to distribute to large numbers of people, making it very cost-effective to sort, filter, calculate, and chart data. There's no need to access a remote database – Active Reports can be sent by e-mail and typically require no training to use.

For example, Israeli Credit Insurance Company (ICIC) uses WebFOCUS Active Reports to let policyholders track and manage their exposure, saving time for internal developers and giving ICIC a competitive edge.

Managing Business Activity

In every business, important events happen during the execution of core operational processes. Yet, few companies have the ability to detect and respond to these events the moment they take place. This leaves them unable to act quickly when certain business conditions occur, such as a complaint filed by a large customer, the receipt of a large sales order, or the onset of hazardous weather conditions that may cause delivery delays.

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WebFOCUS brings business intelligence and operational processes together, providing comprehensive event management solutions that empower companies to react to critical business events as soon as they occur. For example, the United States Postal Service used WebFOCUS to build a compliance system that searches through millions of transactions to identify suspicious money laundering activity. Compliance officers depend on WebFOCUS Business Activity Monitoring (BAM) technology to identify these suspicious transactions and reconstruct purchase patterns for further analysis.

Managing Performance

If an organization wants to manage performance from both a strategic and operational point of view, then users need to be able to access real-time information from the operational systems and deliver it to all operational staff. WebFOCUS Performance Management Framework (PMF) offers this type

of value right out of the box. It combines the analytic, graphical, predictive, and discovery aspects of BI with the cause/effect, weighting, balancing, and leading-indicator analysis of performance management.

Best of all, our performance management is a WebFOCUS application itself, so all of the facilities of WebFOCUS are immediately available. Most other BI vendors have purchased performance management products, and they are poorly integrated into the other facilities of the vendor – or not integrated at all.

Having an out-of-the box solution was appealing to North West London National Health Service (NHS) Foundation Trust, one of the largest specialized NHS mental health trusts in England. NHS deployed a performance management system to gather information from disparate sources and allow managers to automatically measure data against key targets. The solution will gather details from multiple organizations, as well as from patients, to give managers a holistic view of performance. Using WebFOCUS, authorized users can access, drill down, and analyze data relating to their specific area of the Trust and use it to make improvements.

... All for Less

Information Builders is basically offering its customers more for less. These add-on components alleviate the need for customers to buy separate individual products. This bundling strategy not only reduces licensing costs, it makes the entire BI environment easier to learn, upgrade, and maintain. 🌀