

Information Builders enables agile information solutions with business intelligence (BI) and integration technologies. Flexible, scalable, and secure, WebFOCUS – the most widely utilized BI platform – permeates every level of the extended enterprise through a simple and intuitive user experience.

De Montfort University

Snapshot

Organization

De Montfort University (DMU) is one of the leading new universities in the UK and committed to continuously improving learning, teaching and the student experience. Almost 95% of its postgraduates enter employment or further study within six months of completing their course.

The Challenge

Provide decision-makers in all departments and faculties with secure, Web-based access to timely, accurate information in a cost-effective way and simplify and streamline data analysis for all users

Results

Enabled up to 3,000 staff to securely access and interrogate up-to-date information 24/7 from any location, without the need for training, while saving 40% with Information Builders' CPU-based licensing model and cutting hardware costs by 75% by leveraging scalability of WebFOCUS

Information Builders Solution

WebFOCUS

WebFOCUS Resource Manager



At De Montfort University, a WebFOCUS-based dashboard has revolutionized information sharing by enabling each faculty or department to upload, publish and refresh content dynamically.

DMU builds Smart, Agile Business with WebFOCUS

Saving 40% on Licensing and Cutting Hardware Costs by 75%

De Montfort University (DMU), one of the UK's largest universities with 20,500 students and 3,200 staff, is leveraging Information Builders' business intelligence solution to increase market share and raise its profile in the competitive higher education sector. A progressive university that has capitalized on technology advances to drive innovation and growth over the past 10 years, De Montfort is highly rated by employers and its students enjoy excellent career prospects. WebFOCUS enables the University's decision makers to base strategy planning on accurate, up-to-date, easily accessible information. Its Web-based, easy-to-use front-end extends analysis and reporting to more than 3,000 administrative users and academic staff, both inside and outside the firewall. Information Builders' drag-and-drop functionality enables programmers to build data marts rapidly, without the need for complex SQL coding. DMU's operational, strategic and management reports are now compiled centrally from multiple information sources and take just hours rather than weeks to complete, which generates significant time savings. The University's WebFOCUS-based dashboard has revolutionized information sharing by enabling each faculty or department to upload, publish and refresh content dynamically. Information Builders' CPU-based

licensing model allows the University to roll out WebFOCUS to a growing number of users without incurring additional costs, enabling timely, meaningful intelligence to be delivered to everyone who needs it.

Business Intelligence with no Barriers

WebFOCUS now provides BI reporting whereas DMU's legacy reporting tool from another market leader was limited to a small number of administrative staff within the firewall and produced static reports from student records and financial information. The University wanted to give thousands of users direct access to data on critical issues such as admissions and progressions, student entry profiles, most and least popular courses, drop out rates and degree classifications. Drilling down into data on each faculty, course or year would allow trends to be detected and monitored and performance compared with other establishments. "We needed to gain an integrated, real-time view of our activities and make it accessible to all decision makers in order to continuously improve the quality of the education we provide and maximize its value to staff and students," said Business Systems Group Manager John Shelton.

Lower Running Costs and Zero Training

The scalability of WebFOCUS drives down deployment costs and makes it a highly cost-effective option for DMU. "WebFOCUS runs on a single server, instead of the four we used to need, cutting hardware costs by 75%," said John Shelton. "In addition, Information Builders' CPU-based licensing model makes the solution around 40% less expensive than per-seat-based offerings from competing providers." WebFOCUS's front-end browser interface made it instantly popular with staff, who for the most part required no training. Around 10% of access is from outside the firewall, particularly by academic staff who often conduct off-site analysis and reporting as part of their management of programmes and courses.

Turning Information into Intelligence

Programmers at De Montfort use Information Builders' extraction, transformation and load (ETL) tool to extract information from multiple heterogeneous data structures and disparate platforms to create data marts. Data can be refreshed continually to build a near-real-time warehouse, but typically DMU take overnight refreshes of data. Administrative and academic staff can use WebFOCUS's flexible OLAP tools to interrogate information according to different values, build queries and create charts, graphs and interactive reports in any format. "WebFOCUS's OLAP capabilities allow users to personalize business intelligence content to their own needs, which increases the value of the information and improves the efficiency of the user," said John Shelton.

"WebFOCUS transforms our data assets into the knowledge we need to continuously improve teaching quality, meet the needs of staff and students and become one of the UK's most respected and forward looking higher education establishments."

**– John Shelton
Business Systems
Group Manager**

Reports Created in Minutes, Saving Thousands of Pounds Per Year

Managers and faculty heads no longer need to submit input for corporate reports as WebFOCUS enables data to be extracted and collated centrally. "Reports that took months to compile from manually consolidated spreadsheet-based inputs are now produced in minutes," said John Shelton. "We estimate that each of the 100 or so staff members who contribute to reports saves an average of two hours each month while the time savings made by those creating the report are even more significant. This represents financial savings amounting to tens of thousands of pounds each year." WebFOCUS also enables DMU to improve the integrity of its input into external reports required by government agencies. At a recent inspection by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) the University was commended by auditors for its best-practice data collection and distribution processes.

One-Stop Information

De Montfort's management dashboard, developed using standard WebFOCUS functionality, allows each department or faculty to make information available to its staff via a single intranet page. Links connect users to different sections while secure sign on restricts access to authorized users. "The dashboard provides access to both public and secure domains from one location and is the most effective way to share knowledge seamlessly across the University," said John Shelton. "Information is updated as often as needed by the relevant faculty or department which ensures that staff are always working from the most recent information." DMU could extend access further by linking the dashboard to its student portal to make relevant information and reports available to students if it wished.

Partnership Speeds ROI

De Montfort has a strong partnership with Information Builders' Professional Services team who provide consultancy and expertise as required. "We are largely self-sufficient for support and maintenance but use Professional Services for system upgrades or special configurations," said John Shelton. "Working with Professional Services enables us to benefit from the full functionality of WebFOCUS to maximize our investment and generate the best return.

Continuous Performance Improvement

DMU is now looking to optimize and monitor usage of its business intelligence solution with the WebFOCUS Resource Analyser tool. This will enable it to track usage to ensure availability and acceptable response times for queries, while determining which reports are of most use to staff. "WebFOCUS helps us leverage the information we hold to build intelligence into our business processes," said John Shelton. "It enables us to benchmark everything we do ensure that we are continuously improving performance in every area."

Find Out More

To find out how our solutions can help your company succeed, talk to an Information Builders representative today.

Contact your local Information Builders office, visit us at

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