WebFOCUS InfoAssist+
Reporting, Analysis, and Discovery for Business Users

Self-service analytics tools designed for business users and analysts now enable a broad range of workers to autonomously access, query, explore, produce, share, and operationalize insights throughout the organization. This provides greater agility to users who can identify and share findings faster, and make timelier and smarter decisions. These tools are becoming increasingly significant and are now a necessity of modern business.

Information Builders’ WebFOCUS InfoAssist+ is an enterprise-grade analytics tool connected to the WebFOCUS BI and analytics platform, which enables governed self-service reporting, analysis, and discovery capabilities to non-technical users. Business users may very well be supported by reports, dashboards, and other custom apps that are created by IT, developers, and analysts. But the world is changing, and an increasing percentage of those business users are demanding a flexible self-service capability for immediate data access, analysis, and the leveraging of their findings.

Self-Service is More Than Discovery
WebFOCUS InfoAssist+ is unique as it supports the two major categories of self-service analytics.

Reporting and Analysis – There are business users with a predetermined need to create ad hoc queries, reports, charts, documents, and other types of analytical views. InfoAssist+ has been comprehensively supporting this need for many years. Users can create a wide variety of views for personal usage, or for sharing and distribution via static and interactive formats.

InfoAssist+ provides multiple creation modes depending on whether the user is looking to produce a pre-determined output or wishes to explore via data discovery.
Additionally, more advanced users can produce sophisticated information assets, such as multi-page analytic documents and multi-source dashboards, and publish them as InfoApps™ to the WebFOCUS portal for secure access, sharing, and collaboration across the enterprise.

Data Discovery - There are business users who do not start with a specific outcome in mind, but who would like to ask questions and explore their data for trends, patterns, and new insight. InfoAssist+ also supports complete data discovery and visualization of business data, running against a high-speed data sandbox and many other data sources, often combined to create new data contexts. Visualizations can be saved, shared, published, and even delivered into PowerPoint presentations for building business cases via storytelling. InfoAssist+ enables non-technical users to learn and execute data exploration activities that used to require an analytics expert.

The Changing Landscape for IT and Business-Driven Analytics Content

Business users are generating more insights and information-oriented content for personal and collaborative use. Up until very recently, IT and developers were responsible for creating and deploying authored BI analytics content, ranging from charts to reports to documents to dashboards. The amount of content self-generated by business users was minimal, typically ad hoc queries and basic reports.

Now with the emergence of free-form and self-service business user tools, an increasing number of informational requests and exploration of data can be performed by non-technical workers. WebFOCUS InfoAssist+ can help analytics rookies with immediate data access and rudimentary analytics, up to more sophisticated analysts who can blend data sources, create complex reports, explore data, generate insight, and operationalize it for enterprise impact. Business users can now become analytics producers and authors.

Lessening IT’s Load

WebFOCUS InfoAssist+ genuinely empowers business users with the ability to generate new and impactful value out of their data, without the need to involve IT and BI developers for many of their analytical needs. InfoAssist+ delivers benefit not only to users looking for more autonomy, but also to IT and developers whose load may be lessened by fewer requests for assistance. IT’s role is still absolutely critical in supplying governed data sources, as well as partnering with users to establish data sources of interest and relevance. WebFOCUS InfoAssist+ also helps IT and enterprises manage the risk of users accessing/blending non-certified data sources that can lead to bad analytics, bad decisions, and bad business.
How Business Users Can Impact the Enterprise

Let’s take a closer look at WebFOCUS InfoAssist+ from a user and workflow perspective to see how business users can connect to data and impact their business, from a single immediate decision to a fully operationalized information asset.

Connect

WebFOCUS InfoAssist+ users can access governed data from many sources, whether originating from the enterprise, hosted in the cloud or sitting on the desktop. Information Builders has more than 300 data adapters to a wealth of data sources, all of which can be cleansed, blended, validated, and easily presented to non-technical business users. Providing access to governed data sources is critical for users to interact with high-quality data, where single versions of the truth help to avoid costly mistakes attributed to poorly informed decisions originating from bad or user corrupted data.

Produce

InfoAssist+ incorporates a configurable reporting and analytics environment that allows users to quickly and easily create simple queries, reports, and charts, all the way up to advanced dashboards and specialist documents such as financial statements. The interface is familiar to Office users, and it should be a natural next step for any Word or Excel user to easily create a broad array of information assets, for personal or shared use.

Explore

A fully featured data discovery environment is incorporated into InfoAssist+, whereby multiple tables, charts, maps, animations, and other visualization styles can be viewed and combined to help find answers in new and highly visual ways. Critical items that might go undetected in a summarized tabular report stand out clearly in discovery mode. Large volumes of data, aggregated at multiple dimensional levels, can be presented in compelling and meaningful ways on a single screen, giving users the ability to discover and share hidden patterns, trends, and relationships in raw data.
Share/View
InfoAssist+ enables insight everywhere – where everyone across the enterprise can benefit from insights produced or discovered by analysts and business users. Users are able to share findings in many ways, such as e-mailing “active” views that are interactive analytical packages. They can also leverage the WebFOCUS Portal to securely save, organize, and share their InfoAssist+ analytical projects. Other business users can access and interact with resulting reports, dashboards, and visualizations, and can interrogate and comment on data themselves. Not all users require licenses, a significant factor if an organization has hundreds or thousands of people who would benefit from business insights.

Collaborate
InfoAssist+ can be connected to a WebFOCUS portal, which provides many additional benefits including collaboration. The portal contains a secure, central, web-based repository where users can store their work. Groups of users with different roles and privileges can be defined, allowing content to be quickly shared, while securing it from unauthorized viewing. The repository allows work groups of analysts and business users to collaborate on projects, as well as share their work across an entire organization. Critical implementation concerns like security, scalability, and governance are handled by WebFOCUS, allowing the users to focus on generating value from their data.

Operationalize
InfoAssist+ empowers non-technical business users to quickly glean meaning from enterprise data and make faster, better decisions. Via sharing and collaboration, organizations are able to operationalize insights by making them accessible to everyone, and incorporating them into everyday processes. This promotes better decision-making across an organization, which in turn drives better business performance. As users become proficient with WebFOCUS InfoAssist+, they themselves can become authors of analytical content, helping to shift enterprises towards a more progressive self-service analytics culture.