

Next generation BI transforms business through social knowledge sharing

After years of slow, small changes in how Business Intelligence (BI) is used and perceived, there has been a resurgence in the way that this type of technology is utilised within organisations. The introduction of "BI 3.0", dubbed as the next generation of BI solutions, embraces the approach of social media, allowing businesses to leverage the power of collective intelligence to drive BI velocity and enable better decisions to be made in less time.

So says Reinald Bormann, Datacentrix business development manager: Business Intelligence, who maintains that BI has evolved to become more of a forward-looking technology focused on boosting business growth, rather than just the creation of reports.

"While the first wave of BI solutions was touted as being technology that would revolutionise the way that people work, this promise was never realised," he says. "BI essentially became too complicated for the average business user and was something used primarily by analysts to generate and publish reports.

"Looking at how technology has changed over the years, it is clear that not only has it become far more user friendly, it is highly social, user oriented and rapidly evolving and also arms us with information with which to live our lives," Bormann explains. "For instance, Amazon tells us what to read, iTunes makes recommendations on what music we should be listening to, Facebook keeps us in touch with our friends and LinkedIn allows us to investigate future employers and keep our business contacts in order.

"It makes sense then that the new evolution of BI harnesses these technologies to make itself better, faster and stronger."

BI 3.0 is based on five main technologies:

- A new approach to data modelling - The ability to absorb data on-the-fly through in-memory technologies allows companies to continue examining new data, or observe old data in new ways, without needing to pre-define how it is going to be analysed.
- BI 3.0 is for business users – BI 3.0 needs to be easy to use and understand in order to be "owned" by the users that are responsible for the continuous effort to improve a business. It also needs to allow users to make it fit their own specific needs.
- BI everywhere – BI is a critical component in the contribution to a business' success. It therefore needs to be available to users wherever they are and whenever they need it, much like e-mail access.
- Relevant intelligence – The basis of BI 3.0 is providing the right information at the right time, enabling users to find insight they were not aware they were looking for.
- Social BI – Teamwork allows people to accomplish more than one person could. BI 3.0 operates on the same premise - enabling users to work together using social tools to gain a much higher level of insight.

"There are already tools available that can provide entrance into this new world of BI," says Bormann. "One such example is Panorama's recently launched Necto offering which is gaining in popularity. It is truly exciting to see the next iteration of Business Intelligence already being utilised to enable users to leverage collective intelligence, achieve higher insight and take advantage of 'self service' type technology to meet business goals."

About Datacentrix:

Datacentrix is a South Africa-based black empowered company that provides full high performing and secure ICT (information and communication technology) solutions to the country's corporate and public services sectors. Its comprehensive offering ranges from the core areas of infrastructure and business solutions, to outsourcing and other related IT services, positioning it as a strategic long term partner of choice to customers. The company listed on the JSE Securities Exchange in 1998 and operates from regional branch offices in Samrand, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London and Durban. For more information, please visit www.datacentrix.co.za

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