Mark Roush
System Architect

Business Intelligence (BI)
Information at Your Fingertips

Business Intelligence (BI) is vital for decision making, and refers to technologies, applications and practices that allow for the collection, integration, analysis and presentation of business metrics and information. A BI platform is critical for any enterprise IT architecture. It provides the key information that enables critical decision making and allows for controlled access of corporate data. Oracle's integrated BI Enterprise Edition (OBIEE) suite provides to a wide variety of users the means necessary to capture, process, deliver, and analyze information. Below I address the accessibility of two of OBIEE's delivery tools: Oracle BI Answers and Oracle BI Interactive Dashboards.

Oracle BI Answers is a front-end reporting component of the OBIEE suite that allows users to interact with data in a purely web-based environment for ad-hoc reporting needs. Data is arranged and presented logically, while back-end data structure complexities remain hidden from the end-user. Users are able to create highly customizable and drillable reports, charts, pivot tables, and graphs. Once saved, they can be shared, routed, or embedded in dashboards in a wide variety of formats. Users interact with Answers by dragging and dropping data elements onto the query page. Answers then takes those elements and formulates the necessary query in the back-end while the query result is returned to the user. This means non-technical business users can be quickly trained to produce highly complex, attractive reports in a matter of minutes and share those results with key decision makers in their organization. And, with drill-down and guided navigation capabilities, Answers has the ability to link multiple requests together, giving the end-user even more insight into summarized/non-summarized or master/detail relationships (i.e. Which orders make up this total sales figure? Which products belong to this order?).

Now you need to organize your different Answers requests in a presentation that is meaningful to your end-users. That's where Oracle BI Interactive Dashboards enters the scene. Dashboards allows users the ability to gather requests created in Answers and display them in a web-based interface that is customizable based on an end-user's role in the organization. Additionally, Dashboards allow users to display/embed any object that can be accessed through a URL, including audio, video, or external web sites thus making your company's dashboards the ultimate knowledge sharing experience. Developing a dashboard is as easy as dragging and dropping different components (i.e. previously saved Answers requests) onto the dashboard display page. Once again, through guided navigation links, dashboard content gives end-users access to the data and knowledge they care the most about (i.e. Want to hear what the CEO says about the latest trend in sales, click here). In the end, dashboards provide knowledge to workers and executives with a heads up view of business metrics which facilitates quicker, and more accurate, critical decision making. And, with Oracle BI Interactive Dashboards, data may be loaded from a wide variety of sources, including the web, file servers and document repositories.

Oracle BI Answers and Oracle BI Interactive Dashboards, two components of the complete OBIEE suite, provide an unparalleled capacity for obtaining and sharing information. This will give your corporation the BI edge needed to make critical decision making processes easier and faster for executives and for all knowledge workers in general. Answers and Dashboards' ease of use, quality results, and high degree of customizability means your corporation will possess superior tools for all your reporting needs.