



Technology Evaluation Centers'

# BI State of the Market Report



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## Using BI 2.0 to Increase Your Competitive Advantage

by Russell Cooper

### Executive Summary

**Business people rarely take action on numbers alone: they share the information with others, soliciting their feedback and performing external research before taking action. Business intelligence (BI) 2.0—also known as *collaborative BI*—uses the collective intelligence of the user community to enrich existing information. When the community helps itself, information is turned into *actionable* information more quickly than when using purely “traditional” methods of community support, such as meetings, phone calls, and e-mail. And when actions are taken more quickly, the entire organization becomes more nimble and ultimately more competitive.**

**This overview discusses how BI 2.0 can provide real benefits within your organization and what product features to look for in a BI solution in order to realize those benefits.**

### Introduction

Business users know their data better than IT does. They know the meaning of the data, its history, and its relationship with other data. Yet traditional BI solutions have business users referring to IT for assistance with their data. Also, they are forced to work in silos. Sure, they can create their own reports and maybe even share them with other business users, but when it comes to sharing their own knowledge about the data, they have to rely on e-mail, telephone, and face-to-face meetings. By enabling the sharing of data-related knowledge through the BI system itself, business users become more self-sufficient and actions can be taken more quickly.

The *raison d'être* of BI is to provide business users with information that enables them to take action. Even if business users are self-sufficient when it comes to creating and sharing data, data on its own is rarely sufficient to take action. Identifying an opportunity in the market through numbers alone is not sufficient to justify investment in a new product or geography. Identifying a bottleneck in a business process is not sufficient to justify changes in the business process. Information about a business issue or opportunity is merely a part of the overall “solution domain.” Action is usually only taken after considering a number of factors in addition to the data, such as human knowledge and experience, the economic environment, and the competitive environment.

## What to Look For in a BI 2.0 Solution

In this section, we lay out the capabilities to look for in a BI solution—and specific functional requirements needed to support these capabilities—that contribute to the goal of “harnessing collective intelligence.” In general, the more recent entrants into the BI market are paying the most attention to BI 2.0. Some vendors, such as [Good Data](#), have it as a central component of their solution offerings.

The following are key capabilities of BI 2.0:

- **Collaboration**  
Business users are able to share information within the user community and create discussion threads relating to the information.
- **Identification of useful information**  
Business users can flag information that is likely to be of use to others within the community.
- **Enriching of information**  
Business users can enrich the information through their knowledge and experience in addition to other external information sources in order to explain trends and generally assist other consumers of that information.

The community of “business users” needn’t be restricted to internal users. User collaboration is already mature within the Web space, under the guise of Web 2.0. With Web 2.0, collective intelligence is harnessed through comments on blog posts; contributions to wikis such as Wikipedia; and tagging of content, such as photos on Flickr. BI 2.0 takes these methods and applies them in the BI space by making data the focus of user collaboration.

The following sections take the capabilities above and list the functional requirements that support them. Bear in mind that each of these functional requirements is a business user requirement and not an IT or development requirement.

### Collaboration

Collaboration is about being able to share insights and help others to gain insight. These are the main functional requirements for collaboration:

- the ability to use e-mail, instant messaging (IM), or short message service (SMS) to send a link to a report, graph, dashboard, etc., to another member of the user community
- the ability to modify another community member’s report, graph, dashboard, etc., as well as provide feedback to the original report producer
- the ability to comment on or annotate a report, graph, dashboard, etc.
- the ability to receive notification of changes in relevant information or comment threads

## Identification of Relevant and Useful Information

Business users are the people best placed to identify the business relevance of information provided to them by the IT department, as well as the usefulness of that information. This can be done through the following functional requirements:

- the ability to tag any piece of information with a business-appropriate term and to navigate and search those tags
- the ability to rate any piece of information

## Enriching Information

Information in isolation can be confusing, ambiguous, and even misleading. Without greater context for information, many steps may be needed to clarify its meaning before action can be taken, thus prolonging the time to action. Information can be enriched in various ways:

- Members of the business user community can add notes to any area of information.
- Mashups: Mashups are a combination of internal information, user-generated content, and external reference information to provide a more “rounded” view of the solution domain.

A beneficial side effect of implementing BI 2.0 is the permanent record that is created around the reasoning behind an action. A BI 2.0 solution provides a central point of discussion as opposed to e-mail, IM, and meeting minutes. By centralizing discussion about a business issue or opportunity around the supporting data (rather than having it distributed in multiple disconnected systems—or not having it recorded at all), an organization can keep a historical record of why a particular action was taken.

## The Benefits of BI 2.0

When the business user community supports itself through the BI 2.0 capabilities of collaboration, rating and tagging, and data enrichment, some of the support burden is taken off the IT department. As the user community starts to collaborate to answer questions about the data, the number of questions and requests to IT drops. Questions such as “where does this data come from?” and “what does this graph represent?” need only be asked of IT once and then shared with the rest of the community through the BI solution.

The more knowledge is shared, the more self-sufficient the business user community becomes. This results in business users feeling a sense of ownership of their data again, with a genuine reduced dependency on IT. Decisions can be made and actions taken more quickly. For example, a sales manager might typically spend two days chasing numerous people about a spurious number on the sales forecast. If this can be reduced to five minutes through annotation and collaboration capabilities within the system, the sales team becomes more agile. And if there are hundreds of such small actions that can be sped up in a similar way, the organization becomes more nimble as a whole.

## Conclusion

An issue that still exists in the BI market today is that business users are overly dependent on IT to deliver answers related to the information that they receive. However, IT can never be expected to know as much about the business as the business people themselves.

BI 2.0 enables the business user community to support itself, not just in terms of their ability to create and modify their own reports, but also in terms of sharing and enriching the information supplied to them, and providing assistance and feedback to each other and the information producers.

The bottom line: A business user community that is self-supporting reduces the burden on IT, and is able to arrive at a point of action more quickly than when each business user works in a silo.



## About the Author

Russell Cooper is TEC's BI analyst. He has over 15 years of experience in the enterprise software industry, and has a keen interest in how organizations maximize the value of their existing data. During his career, Cooper has worked exclusively for companies that have built their businesses around the storage, movement, and retrieval of data—from electronic data interchange (EDI) to BI, from fourth generation language (4GL) application development to geographic information systems (GISs). This experience has afforded Cooper a broad perspective on data and data management.

Now based in Ireland, Cooper has a global perspective on business, having worked in many countries including the UK, Australia, Denmark, and the US.



# Case Study: RP Data Uses LogiXML to Power Its Real-estate Reporting and Analysis

## About RP Data

Anyone who has had any experience with the real estate market knows how data-intensive and data-centric it is. History and reports on individual properties; area sales by city, suburb, zip code or street; property investments; and countless other items are part of this market's lifeblood. For this reason, a company that provides such data and reports consistently and reliably is a beacon to the many players of the real estate industry.

Based in Australia, RP Data is Australasia's number-one provider of Property Information data and analytics. It has been providing high-quality data and reports to the real estate market in Australia and New Zealand since 1991. Its mission is to offer the most accurate and comprehensive database of property records in Australasia. Every day, more than 30,000 real estate agents, valuers, and other property and financial professionals throughout the region are logging on to use RP Data's Property System.

Being able to live up to its mission is a constant challenge in a data-heavy environment where, every year, tens of millions of records are added to their existing 108 million property data records, and where nearly 9,000 property professionals are thirsty for data every day. In this kind of environment, a powerful and flexible business intelligence (BI) solution is of the essence.

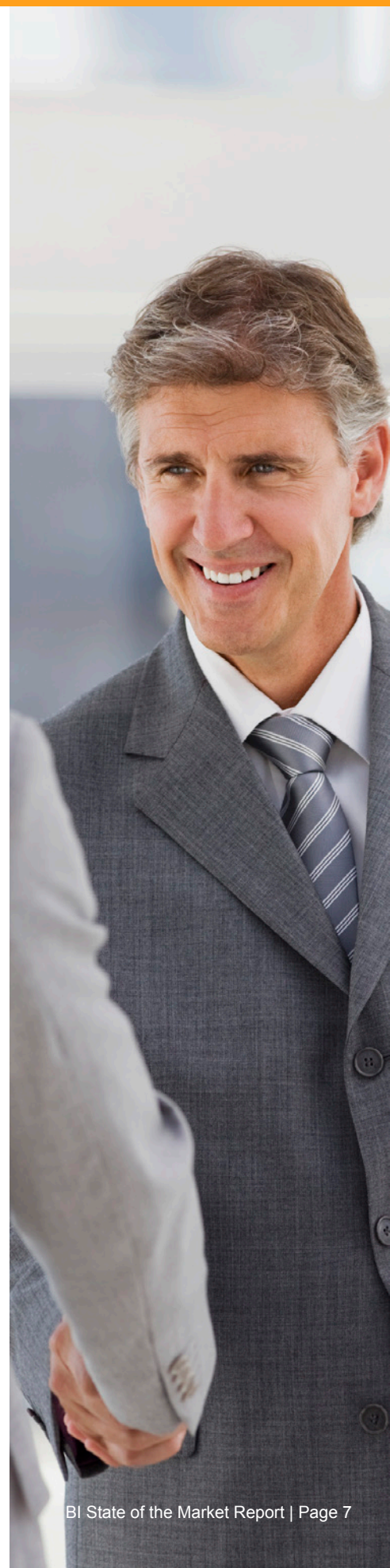
## The Challenge

"In our market, the challenge is delivering meaningful results to the users as quickly as possible," says RP Data's general manager for product and marketing, Lee Wade.

"The success we have been having in providing reports to a larger and larger market got us to a point where the capabilities of our current BI solution were beginning to show strain. It was at that point that we looked ahead and started shopping for a more robust BI application."

"On one hand, we are dealing with rows of data to the tune of tens of millions and growing; and on the other, we have thousands of users analysing data from many different angles. In this kind of scenario, we determined there are three main requirements that a business intelligence application must have: power, flexibility, and scalability."

"Power gives the ability to query the data in different ways and get answers that are prompt, reliable, and useful," adds Wade. "Flexibility allows different users to get the answers most useful to them in the format most desired, without needing to ask for assistance from report developers. A real estate agent, a property valuer, and a financial professional, for instance, will all need to see different information—although the data comes from the same databases. And scalability, as we all know, enables the solution to deliver larger reports to a larger number of users without slowing down the system unnecessarily."



## The Solution

After evaluating several business intelligence platforms, RP Data chose Logi 9 from LogiXML. In particular, RP Data has focused on Logi Info, LogiXML's managed reporting solution, where reports are created by developers and then personalized by the users employing them.

The majority of RP Data's focus has centered on Logi Info's dashboards, analytics, and report elements. The unlimited user licensing model has allowed any combination of drag-and-drop dashboards, interactive reports, and personalized analytics to be delivered to all users. These elements were incorporated into RP Data's existing user management and security infrastructure to achieve two main outcomes:

- provide all users with high levels of interactivity and visualization to the data and how the information is presented
- enable each individual user to personalize their information (for instance, changing logos, corporate style sheets, and report and portal content)

In addition, internal business analysts at RP Data are using Logi Ad Hoc, LogiXML's ad hoc reporting and analysis solution. This is enabling non-technical users to create ad hoc reports and analysis from standardized data sets, without requiring the assistance of specialist IT staff or report developers. The complexities of the large back-end databases are hidden from the analysts, enabling them to focus on create new reports and analysis with a high level of self-sufficiency.

"The completeness, quality, and user-friendliness of the Logi platform gave us the tools to look forward to serving more data and more customers with confidence. LogiXML allowed us to evaluate and stress-test their solution in-house, with the local team from Nano Blue providing support and assistance with our questions."

## The Results

"Now, a single reporting solution built on top of Logi 9 is being introduced to replace no fewer than 57 different reports that we had to create in the past. Working with tools like dashboards and ad hoc reporting, users can personalize both the type of information they view and their report-delivery environment; they can change logos and style to conform to their needs without needing additional resources. "

"Another benefit is that users can now write data back into their database right from the report, meaning that they can conduct business more efficiently from a single location. For example, if a real estate agent knows the data they are viewing about a property is inaccurate, they can update it directly from the report, thereby constantly improving the quality of the information available.

"We also found Logi's development process very efficient. From a developer's perspective, LogiXML's elemental design approach enables reusing of data objects, making report development quicker and more streamlined. As a result, we were quickly able to build our prototype, then move this into a production state to make available to our customers."

"RP Data is a data and analytics company. We have chosen to trust LogiXML to make our job more efficient and serve our customers better. In other words, Logi 9 has enabled us to leap forward in the way we serve our customers and deliver more valuable data and information," said Wade.



<http://www.logixml.com/>





## Analyze, Optimize, Repeat: How Smart Marketers Succeed Online

When it comes to consumer reach, the Internet is pure gold. Consider this: on average, Americans spend more time searching for information online than they do driving their cars.<sup>1</sup>

The McKinsey Quarterly says with changes in consumer behavior, the Web is now the most popular source for finding information, more than “books, the yellow pages, libraries, car dealers, department stores, or real-estate agents.”<sup>2</sup>

It’s no wonder more companies are using web sites, search engines, blogs, wikis, social networks, and the like to communicate with customers. Not just for advertising, but for concept testing, brand building, and customer service.

Indeed, the Internet is expected to become a key influencer in the first two stages of the consumer decision-making process: product awareness and information gathering.

By 2010, organizations can also expect to make more than 10 percent of overall sales online—double what it is now.<sup>3</sup>

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1-Source: **Patricia Martin**, The RenGen Manifesto, **ChangeThis**, November 7, 2007

2-Source: How companies are marketing online: A McKinsey Global Survey, **The McKinsey Quarterly**, September 2007

3-Source: **Ibid.**

## Different Universe, Different Rules

But leveraging the digital universe requires marketers to [look beyond traditional tactics](#). The Internet is shaped by a unique set of rules, and people interact differently.

Cultural marketing expert Patricia Martin calls it a “facilitating medium,” where things get done through collaboration and participation.

It represents a move “away from the idea of mass conformity that allowed mass marketing, and toward the ideal of individual self-expression... this marks the first time in history that mass communication is a dialogue, not a monologue.”

More tellingly: “The old rules of marketing by age, sex, income, and other identifiers no longer dominate.

Targeting the consumers’ “interests and appealing to their sense of creativity in a way that leaves room for self-expression wins the day.”<sup>4</sup>

## Banner Ads: How Not to Market Online

Online banner ads are a cautionary tale. The percentage of people who respond to them has been steadily shrinking. Last year, the average click-through rate dropped from 0.75 percent to 0.2 percent.

According to BusinessWeek, the decline in click rates “reflects how Web users are getting numb to the least sophisticated Web come-ons.”

To reverse the trend, a more informed approach is in order.

By targeting ads “based on criteria such as the location, content of Web pages visited, or information researched on search engines,” marketing departments could see “increases of 30 percent to 300 percent in click rates.”<sup>5</sup>

## Know Your Customer

It seems gaining market intelligence is essential in a Web world of customized offerings. Social networking sites, for example, present an abundance of user information that marketers are eager to tap into.

The digital universe produces a steady stream of data, as users make choices and navigate online. These actions produce information that can be counted, tracked, and analyzed.

To wit: Facebook’s controversial new “Beacon” platform will allow companies to target ads based on what individuals share with friends.

“Everything from commonly available data, such as location, age, and gender, to more personal info such as work history, relationship status, and political leanings,” says BusinessWeek.<sup>6</sup>

Just as important, the digital universe produces a steady stream of data, as users make choices and navigate online.

These consumer actions produce information that, with the right tools, can be counted, tracked, and analyzed.

4-Source: **Patricia Martin**, The RenGen Manifesto, **ChangeThis**, **November 7, 2007**

5-Source: **Catherine Holahan**, So Many Ads, So Few Clicks, **BusinessWeek**, **November 12, 2007**

6-Source: The Business Week – News You Need to Know, **BusinessWeek**, **November 19, 2007**

“The old rules of marketing by age, sex, income, and other identifiers no longer dominate.”

– Patricia Martin

“Web users are getting numb to the least sophisticated Web come-ons.”

– BusinessWeek

The digital universe produces a steady stream of data, as users make choices and navigate online. These actions produce information that can be counted, tracked, and analyzed.

## Less Push, More Pull

In other cases, companies can leverage their own Web technologies.

Communication channels such as user and customer forums, online chat, blogs, and even e-mail could be a boon to sales and marketing efforts.

In a McKinsey survey on how businesses are using Web 2.0, one respondent had this to say: “We have used blogs to strengthen our stakeholder communication and we are currently implementing wiki technology in our intranet and extranet sites.

“The main benefit seems to be the stronger sense of community that we can nurture through technologies that are more interactive, less push.”<sup>7</sup>

## Digital Equals Data

Leveraging all this online content requires more than spreadsheets or desktop applications. [Business intelligence](#) can help marketers produce better results by integrating data across systems, and delivering dimensional views of the information.

BI can serve up social networking content, blog information, and customer comments as well as unstructured data such as e-mails.

The resulting analytics and reports allow marketers to see patterns and relationships in new ways to uncover user interests and attitudes—and in turn more effectively hone their message.

One example? “Retailers could add comments and complaints from e-mail and call centers into a BI application to enhance their market segmentation analysis,” suggests CIO magazine.<sup>8</sup>

## Better Metrics

According to another McKinsey survey on marketing online, a common barrier for companies is insufficient metrics to measure the impact of internet technologies.

The issue is in fact “counterintuitive because the ease of measuring returns on investment is among the key selling points of vehicles such as paid search.”<sup>9</sup>

What marketing departments need are [scorecards](#) and [dashboards](#) to capture Web metrics in informative ways – allowing them to track measures such as user activity, response rates, and cost per response.

BI meets PPC: Analyze, optimize, repeat.

Retailers could add comments and complaints from e-mail and call centers into a BI application to enhance their market segmentation analysis.

– CIO

7-Source: How businesses are using Web 2.0: A McKinsey Global Survey, **The McKinsey Quarterly**, March 2007

8-Source: **Diann Daniel**, Five Key Business Intelligence Trends You Need to Know, **CIO**, October 31, 2007

9-Source: How companies are marketing online: A McKinsey Global Survey, **The McKinsey Quarterly**, September 2007



## A Customer Dialog

Consider [pay per click](#), one of the fastest-growing segments of the online advertising market. In this case, an advertiser pays each time a user clicks on an ad.

[Business intelligence](#) leverages the user metrics, which can tell ad departments a lot about how people respond to their designs.

What days of the week have the highest traffic? What do users click on? Which ad produces a better quality lead?

This way, organizations can quickly see what's working and what's not. The information feeds back into the process so messages can be refined and re-targeted for more profitable results.

In essence, advertisers gain the ability to have a quality conversation with each consumer—that gives rise to greater market insight, better targeting, and higher return on investment (ROI).

## Summary

As the Internet gains influence, online marketing may well be the next frontier for consumer engagement. But marketers will have to play by its rules.

That means a greater reliance on market intelligence and customer knowledge to inform and deliver campaigns that hit home.

[Reporting](#), [analysis](#), and [metrics](#) offer the means that can help marketing departments do just that.

URL: [http://www.cognos.com/newsletter/business/st\\_071129\\_02.html](http://www.cognos.com/newsletter/business/st_071129_02.html)

### Web Demo



### Performance Management in Marketing





## Mashups and Pervasive BI

*GIS Mapping, Dashboards Exemplify Ways to Make Web-based BI Features Usable by More End-users across Organizations.*

### Executive Summary

Combining information from different data sources, mashups are becoming a popular and powerful tool in business intelligence (BI). In Web-based BI, mashups appear in two general categories: overlay mashups and dashboards.

Overlay mashups blend two or more kinds of information into a single Web-based feature or application. A typical example of this type of mashup is GIS mapping, where business markers and metrics may be placed on Google maps for a convenient single view of geographically-related corporate information.

Dashboards, instead, combine different types of data—sometimes from more than one data source—by showing them in multiple panels on a single Web page. In turn, panels may also contain overlay mashups, for instance in the form of a GIS map.

In the world of Web 2.0 and BI 2.0, mashups that are interactive and dynamic are appreciated by business end users. Interactivity can come in the form of drill-down or drill-through capability, as well as in the ability to use the Web-based feature or solution as a dedicated desktop application. And, a mashup can be made dynamic through the use of Flash technology, for example, by enabling key performance indicators, graphs or charts to update dynamically when the page is opened or refreshed.

Business intelligence features that have an interactive feel and intuitive, browser-based navigation help spread BI to a wider and deeper range of business end users. This model, called pervasive BI, is defined by accessibility of reporting and analysis tools to non-technical end users across organizations. Although mashups and dashboards are not the only features conducive to pervasive BI, they are a great example of how by integrating familiar Web 2.0 capabilities into a BI solution help more end users have access to the data and information they need.

## Introduction

What's a mashup? Simply put, a combining or overlaying of two or more sets of information from different sources. Mashup is a concept that started in the world of club music. For several years, people have been combining rock music clips with rap clips into "mashups" for dance clubs and parties. More elaborate mashups merge several different types of music—rock, rap, techno, even ancient Gregorian chant—all into one dance tune. Sometimes lines from movies and famous speeches (e.g., "I have a dream" or "Ich bin ein Berliner") even make it in to a dance track. Making great mashups requires a deep knowledge of obscure music, links to clip libraries and, sometimes, a sense of humor.

A mashup is also a kind of video. Just like with a music mashup, a video mashup uses images from different sources, merging them together and superimposing them to one another to form a new, dynamic and often surrealistic effect.

Mashups are moving beyond music and video and into the world of the Web applications and business intelligence (BI). Web-based mashups have the same basic idea as with dance music and video—combining otherwise discrete components from different data sources into a single aggregate. Business intelligence mashups fall into two general categories: overlay mashups and dashboards.

Overlay mashups merge data from more than one source into a single user-controlled feature; a typical example is combining business metrics (e.g., sales by rep) with Google Maps. A dashboard, instead, is a single Web page containing various panels each displaying a different object that may be a graph or chart, a Web site, RSS feeds and so on.

In the world of Web 2.0—and consequently BI 2.0—mashups are a useful, interactive tool in the hands of the business end user. First of all, they provide a way to integrate different data and visualize the results in a coherent and persuasive manner. And, when enhanced by technologies like Flash and AJAX, and when featuring drill-down and drillthrough capability, they become some of the most versatile and visually-powerful BI instruments in the decision maker's arsenal.

Let us now explore overlay mashups and dashboards separately, taking a look at what they are, what technologies they employ and what benefit they give the business end user. Then, we will see how mashups are among the ways in which BI can become pervasive within organizations—that is, readily usable by a wide spectrum of nontechnical BI consumers.

## Overlay Mashups

Overlay mashups are the combination of two or more data sources for use in a single Web-based feature or application.

A common example of the overlay mashup is the placement of charts, graphs and other business-relevant data onto a Web-based map. Google, for example, publishes an open API that allows software vendors and developers to mash up geographically-relevant information with Google Maps. So, depending on how your report developer sets it up, your BI application may show pins or markers on a Web-based map to represent customer locations. It may color those pins to reflect customer segments. When you mouse over a pin, interactive charts or graphs may pop up dynamically showing recent sales activity and customer service information for that location.

One of the benefits of this mapping feature, known as Geographic Information System (GIS) maps, is that it's no different from the Web-based maps end users employ in their daily life when looking up an address or the location of a business on the Internet. Only, instead of showing the pop-up ratings of a restaurant or the phone number of a store, they show (for instance) the revenue of a retail location or the performance of a sales rep. Therefore, we can look at map mashups as the first, and perhaps most intuitive example of overlay mashups.



The next steps beyond maps will probably also require an intuitive context. For example, an architectural extension of the map concept might include a mashup of live security video feeds and entry/exit statistics overlaid onto premises maps and floor plans. The floor plan context may also be used to support shop-floor material movement, productivity and quality charts and graphs.

All of these examples involve spatial contexts such as maps and floor plans, plus information relevant to various places within this context. As business intelligence users become more accustomed to mashups, the model may eventually be extended to show inventory and lead-times overlaid on a non-geographic supply chain model. Productivity, quality metrics and other worker performance management metrics could be overlaid on workflow and process maps.

There are two basic ingredients for overlay mashups to work. The first is an abundance of open APIs, such as the one published for Google Maps. In addition to the open APIs, the BI tools themselves need to be modular in design and Web-based. XML and HTML are the natural vehicles to make this level of integration happen.

But the true test of an overlay mashup is its user-friendliness—specifically, its userfriendliness within the model and familiar feel of the end user's Web browser.

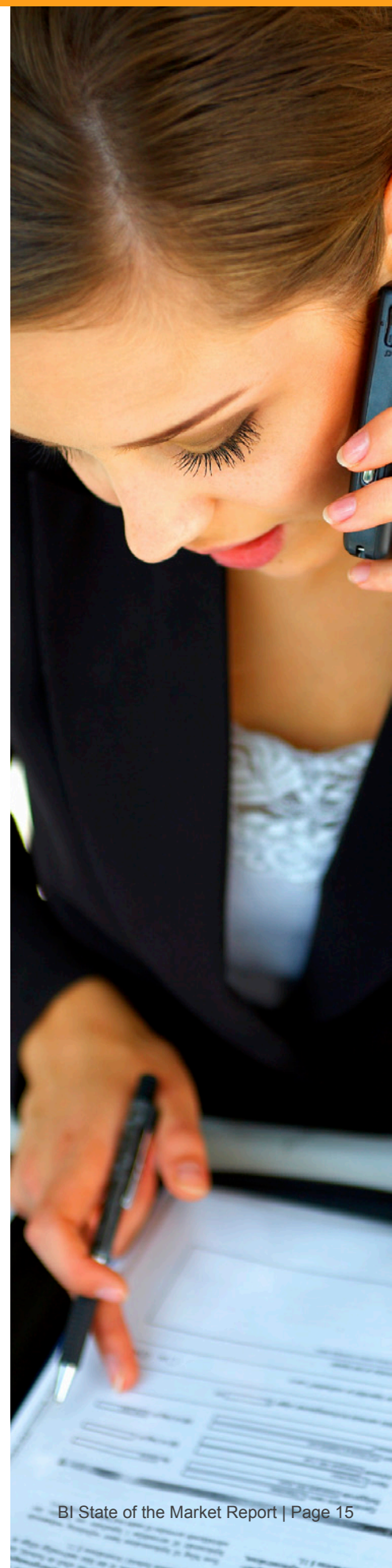
## Dashboards as Mashups

Dashboards are a collection of panels all presenting different information on a single Web page. Depending on how they are set up, panels may contain key performance indicators (KPIs), graphs and charts, Web sites navigable right from the dashboard, RSS feeds and basically most anything else that can be placed on the Web. Even an overlay mashup feature such as a GIS map can take the form of a dashboard panel.

Dashboards are becoming popular and increasingly common in the BI community because, like physical dashboards, they allow the user to get a single view of the information relevant for 'driving' the business. In other words, they do not require the end user to access different reports—or even different Web pages—to see the information they need every day to run their business.

More sophisticated dashboards feature drill-down and drill-through capability and make use of technologies such as Flash and AJAX to become interactive and dynamic. For instance, end users may move the panels around—just like they would in a desktop application—without needing to refresh the whole Web browser page. Or, by mousing over the bars of a chart, underlying figures may be revealed even without a click. Users may also select and deselect the panels from a menu to weed out information that is not relevant to them and to only see what is most pertinent to their business. More sophisticated dashboards also give users the possibility to act on the information presented without leaving the dashboard, for example, by enabling them to send a preset business alert to sales reps whose performance is below or above a certain level.

Currently, dashboards tend to present information from a single data source or database. With BI 2.0 coming of age, however, the full potential of dashboards to include data from multiple sources will very likely be exploited—making them ever more versatile and powerful.



## Dashboards: a Real-life Example

Let's take a look at an actual case study to see the kind of situation in which a dashboard becomes an easy solution to a complex situation. Virgin Vie at Home is a UKbased cosmetics company. Sales are handled by 12,000 independent sales consultants distributed throughout the UK. Virgin Vie at Home wanted to develop a suite of sales and performance reports for the sales consultants without deploying software on 12,000 individual PCs or creating a complex user interface. So they turned to dashboards for a solution.

Now they have a dashboard interface that allows sales consultants to see their most critical performance metrics in a single Web-browser window. With this Web-based dashboard approach, Virgin Vie at Home can provide flexible reporting in a single view to thousands of users without having to maintain software in a widely distributed environment.

"From the user's perspective we needed an easy-to-use and easy-to-access system," says Andrew Steward, Virgin Vie at Home Systems Analyst. "We expect our sales consultants to be great at sales but do not expect them to be software developers. Therefore, the first issue was finding a Web-based client that could be accessed from anywhere. We did not want to require any software on the client, and we needed to support all the popular Web browsers."

Steward adds, "Another key objective was cutting down the number of individual queries that were required to meet the needs of the sales consultants. A dashboard implementation that pushes the most commonly requested data out to users pre-empts about 80% of the queries. Our dashboard elements are easily understood by our non technical users."

## Dashboards: Conclusion

There again we see resurfacing the concepts of user-friendliness, integration to what end users are already familiar with, interactivity and Web-based versatility. This example illustrates quite well how one feature like dashboards can use these characteristics to simplify the gathering and distribution of information to non-technical decision makers, and to still allow a fair amount of personalization by the end user. In the future, dashboards will represent data from increasingly different data sources. In fact, many of these data sources will not even be in the company data center. This may be shocking to some, especially the proponents of enterprise data warehouses that contain anything and everything about the company. The reality is, however, that unreplicable data stores are forming that will practically never be part the enterprise data warehouse model.

For example, live, streaming data is very likely to become a key component of the enterprise dashboard. Some, if not most, of this streaming content is likely to come from outside the firewall. Plus, there are a growing number of companies offering useful widgets that can be placed on the user desktop, such as newsfeeds, weather bulletins and other alerts. Some charts and graphs may be served up from partner's BI systems as well, for example, a chart showing product lead times or inventory status. There is no end to the combination of objects that can and will be represented on the BI dashboard of the future.

Even in the case of dashboards, users can take advantage of the familiar feel and navigability of Web features that—very likely—they use every day in their personal lives. For instance, pages like 'My Yahoo' are essentially dashboards, since they are a collection of different panels showing various kinds of information; and, like dashboard panels, they may be selected or deselected by users to give them a personalized experience. This too is a bridge towards pervasive BI.

## Mashups and Pervasive BI

Remember the green-bar reports generated by Dot Matrix printers, which were the order of the day as recently as a decade ago? Or the Access-based reports created and read by an exclusive group of computer 'wizards'? Thanks to the Web and to the Webcentricity of good BI solutions, these days feel like an eternity ago. Today, BI no longer needs to be static or confined to small groups of technically-minded personnel. And since the innovations ushered in with Web 2.0 are spilling over into BI, in many ways the two fields (Web technology and BI) are evolving as one.

Business intelligence features that have an interactive feel and intuitive, browser-based navigation help spread BI to a wider and deeper range of business end users. This model, called pervasive BI, is defined as accessibility of reporting and analysis tools to non-technical end users across organizations. Although mashups and dashboards are not the only features conducive to pervasive BI, they are a great example of how by integrating familiar Web 2.0 capabilities into a BI solution, they help more end users have access to the data and information they need.

And indeed, many in the BI industry feel that we are on a path toward pervasive BI. That is, they envision an environment in which all levels of users, CEOs, managers and individual contributors will have frequent access to and interaction with BI tools. To become pervasive, BI tools and systems need to be integral to users' work environments. By applying charts, graphs and other visual tools to maps and other Web-based contexts, BI tools and systems take a significant step toward entering the familiar world of the Internet browser. Dashboards have already begun to enter the historical decision-support world by providing a single view into the key elements of the enterprise needing daily monitoring.

These developments represent great strides in the world of BI. Features consolidating and unifying different data sources as well as ways to act on information—all in a familiar Web-based format—are ideal vehicles to deliver BI to the 'masses'. As part of this development, we are also witnessing how more and more features give end users ad-hoc-like capabilities even within managed reporting solutions. More options in the hand of the end user, easier navigability, familiar feel, consolidated format. This is what makes mashups and dashboards increasingly popular features in the world of pervasive BI, the next generation of BI.







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## LogiXML

LogiXML is the smart choice for BI, giving you more power with less effort. It's simple to start creating Web-based dashboards in hours, reports in minutes, and analysis on demand, without complex pricing schemes or user fees. Easy to connect, quick to build, and intuitive to use, LogiXML empowers everyone to get the most value from their data, no matter where it resides.



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## IBM

IBM Cognos 8 BI delivers a complete range of BI capabilities on a single service-oriented architecture (SOA). IBM Cognos 8 BI allows users to monitor business performance, analyze trends, and measure results. Functionality for reports, analysis, dashboards, and scorecards is deployed and managed on SOA. The product also allows users to

- build reports, online analytical processing (OLAP) cubes, dashboards and scorecards using all data sources;
- scale to support hundreds of thousands of users;
- meet immediate user needs and expand or modify as needed in a modular way.

IBM Cognos 8 Go! Search is a new BI search capability that enables anyone to access strategic enterprise information through a familiar search interface, leading to better overall performance management. Now, users can find reports, metrics, analyses, and business events that answer critical business questions with a simple keyword search.

## About Technology Evaluation Centers (TEC)

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