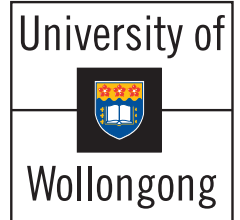


University of Wollongong



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*Nikita Atkins, Project Director Performance Indicators,
University Of Wollongong*

Focus on strategic data delivery

The University of Wollongong is located on the south coast of New South Wales, 1 hour to the south of Sydney. It has over 21,000 students and 2,000 staff spread across six Australian locations and its international campus in Dubai.

The University of Wollongong has been repeatedly recognised for its excellence including:

- Times Higher Education Supplement Commonwealth University of the Year 2006
- Ranked by the Australian Newspaper as the No 1 teaching university in Australia in 2005
- Ranked as the Australia's top university for educational experience and graduate outcomes for the last five years.
- Per capita, one of Australia's leading research universities

The university offers leading-edge academic courses, world-class research programs, and maintains a commercial enterprise arm.

As early as 2000, one of the university's strategic goals was to improve operations through the development of a single, integrated, web-based information management system.

At the time, the university's finance, human resources and student services staff and faculty all used different decision support applications to generate reports, for example, on income and expenditure and HR statistics. This disparate approach resulted in an inconsistent view of the university's business data, with reports created in multiple styles and formats, making it difficult to collate and integrate information, particularly for cross-indicator business reporting.

In addition, users who wanted information related to their business function had to go through an intermediary, which was both unproductive and time

Type of business:

- Tertiary Education

Goal:

- Improve university performance through a comprehensive integrated performance management system that communicates to the university community relevant and accurate information around the university's operational, tactical and strategic goals

Solution Requirements:

- Deliver a consistent user perspective of all the university's business data through a single, integrated, web-based system
- Deliver a comprehensive view of the whole of the university's operations as an integrated business
- Ability to navigate from an aggregated university-wide perspective through to individual faculties and departments, down to record-level information
- Scalable to support all users across the institution
- Flexible enough to meet evolving and expanding business requirements

Benefits:

- Independent recognition of progress towards meeting management reporting requirements
- Consistent, accurate and timely information available across the university
- Ability to 'drill down' to different levels of detail

Solution:

- PowerPlay,
- ReportNet,
- Enterprise Planning, and
- DecisionStream

consuming. Users wanted timely access to management information in a consistent format no matter where the data resided.

Making a powerplay for information

The University initially piloted Cognos to establish a proof-of-concept for its report building and generation capabilities. The project incorporated 25 users in the



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academic faculty, as well as staff in finance, HR and student services. Upon completion in 2001, the system was rolled out to 100 users.

Since 2001, the University has expanded the deployment of additional PowerPlay cubes across many different areas, including finance, HR, research, students, teaching and facilities management.

The implementation then expanded with the deployment of PowerPlay Web, which enables users to 'slice and dice' large volumes of data retained in 'cube' structures to see factors impacting their business. Data 'cubes' encompass all the university's major information sources, including finance, HR, research, consultancies, students and facilities management.

"We have a number of metrics (data cubes) that help us track profit and loss margins, student and staff details, activity based costing and asset management. The flexibility of our system has allowed users to drill down from a 'big picture' overview. This allows us to make decisions on everything from constructing a new building to the individual cost of teaching a class of 10 students in a particular subject," said Chris Grange, Vice Principal Administration at the University of Wollongong

"PowerPlay really has transformed users' focus around information and reporting," said Nikita Atkins, Project Director of Performance Indicators at the University of Wollongong.

"They no longer want a print-out or screen with a single metric or KPI, they now use PowerPlay to drill into that number to understand what is driving it. Users don't want to only report on their performance, but understand and analyse that performance."

Planning for success

Following on the success of its PowerPlay experience, the University of Wollongong acquired Cognos Planning.

Previously the University had used approximately 25 spreadsheets to manage over 680 cost centres just to provide high-level faculty and department budgets.

"Enterprise Planning has allowed the University greater transparency and control over its budgeting process. We now create faster budgets and forecasts down to a lower level and can link budgets to key metrics such as number of staff and students," said Atkins.

"Although Enterprise Planning was originally brought in for financial operational budgeting, we are now expanding its usage into areas such as workforce planning. Cognos Planning has become a critical piece to the University Performance Management puzzle," added Atkins.

Reporting on success

The University has always recognised the need for detailed transactional reports. To meet its reporting needs, Cognos Impromptu was acquired at the same time as PowerPlay, and has since migrated to Cognos ReportNet.

ReportNet reports complement and enhance the PowerPlay cubes. ReportNet provides the University with detailed transactional reports, high-level summary and management reports, as well as powerful, graphical digital dashboards.

"ReportNet is the natural partner for PowerPlay. Users want to be able to drill from a high-level cube to view their transactions," said Atkins.

"The power of ReportNet to build, deliver and manage ad-hoc, transaction, summary and dashboard-style reporting is fantastic. Users don't have to learn different systems for different style of reports. It is all there, one product, in one location for all their reporting needs," added Atkins.

Cognos is the strategy for success

With the performance management system built up organically over a six-year period, and encompassing over 200 users, the University has achieved significant progress towards meeting its strategic goals.

"The feedback we are getting from our users is that the time savings are just incredible. Using Cognos to develop our integrated management information system is part of a strategic plan to take our business forward," said Grange.

"The Cognos performance management solution has not only allowed our users to understand the many aspects and dimensions within the University of Wollongong, but also to find efficiencies and drive effectiveness in those same areas," added Atkins.

The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) — an independent, not-for-profit national agency that promotes, audits, and reports on quality assurance in the Australian higher education sector — further reflected these comments in a 2006 audit report.

"... [The university] has, as a matter of priority, been developing its use of data reporting tools (Cognos). The university is building up an information capability and capacity which will, in time, provide excellent support for both strategic and operation management purposes," the report stated. "...The University is improving its support of management by, for example, developing comprehensive information analysis and reporting process..."

“We think we have got a significant competitive advantage from Cognos’ products. It has helped us to get extra insights into how the University’s business is going and to work out ways of improving what we do. We think that a number of the areas of information we have developed is really helping to give us an edge as a University,” said Grange.

“Moving forward we are looking at further ways to reduce the decision making cycle and increase insight into all the activities that University of Wollongong is engaged in. This includes moving to Cognos 8 with its services oriented architecture (SOA) and delivering ‘one version of the truth’”, added Atkins.

About Cognos

Cognos, the world leader in business intelligence and performance management solutions, provides world-class enterprise planning and BI software and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance.

Cognos brings together technology, analytical applications, best practices, and a broad network of partners to give customers a complete performance system. The Cognos performance system is an open and adaptive solution that leverages an organization’s ERP, packaged applications, and database investments. It gives customers the ability to answer the questions — How are we doing? Why are we on or off track? What should we do about it? — and enables them to understand and monitor current performance while planning future business strategies.

Cognos serves more than 23,000 customers in more than 135 countries, and its top 100 enterprise customers consistently outperform market indexes. Cognos performance management solutions and services are also available from more than 3,000 worldwide partners and resellers. For more information, visit the Cognos Web site at <http://www.cognos.com>.

