

BI Analytics Tools Buyer's Guide Part 2

Your expert guide to BI analytics tools



In this e-guide

- Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors
- Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products
- Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool
- MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics
- A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite
- Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors

Rick Sherman, Athena IT Solutions

Deciding which BI analytics tool to buy shouldn't be based on the product with the most features but on the tool that best supports the needs of your business users.

There are a plethora of business intelligence (BI) tools on the market that address the increasing analytics needs of businesses of all sizes and industries. However, determining which BI analytics tool or tools to buy isn't always easy.

In this article, we examine BI analytics tools from 12 leading vendors: Birst, IBM, Information Builders, Logi Analytics, Microsoft, MicroStrategy, Oracle, SAP, SAS, Qlik Technologies Inc., Tableau and TIBCO. Based on the use cases and evaluation criteria outlined in previous articles, let's examine which product or products can best meet your organization's needs.

In this e-guide

▀ [Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors](#)

▀ [Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products](#)

▀ [Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool](#)

▀ [MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics](#)

▀ [A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite](#)

▀ [Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite](#)

Evaluating BI analytics tools

By identifying with the following use cases, you can determine which of the BI analytics tools examined here will best meet your needs.

Operational snapshots. In this use case, pre-defined production reports are built to support business processes and operational reporting. Information Builders, SAP, Oracle, IBM, MicroStrategy and TIBCO offer BI products that match these requirements.

Oracle and SAP are the leaders in ERP applications and have leveraged their BI products to offer prebuilt operational reporting. Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite, SAP BusinessObjects and IBM Cognos are typically used by large enterprises because of resource and product cost considerations. For small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) or more cost-conscious enterprises, Information Builder's WebFOCUS, MicroStrategy and TIBCO JasperSoft are viable alternatives. These BI tools support large-scale operational reporting across numerous enterprise applications and are resource- and cost-effective for enterprises of all sizes.

While IBM, Oracle and SAP acquired other BI tool vendors to become part of their product portfolios, other enterprise application vendors have built their operational reporting by leveraging BI tools that are targeted for embedding.

In this e-guide

Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors

Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products

Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool

MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics

A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite

Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

QlikView and Logi Info are BI tools that have been embedded in operational reporting or used to build BI packaged applications.

Limited exploration. Here, data and metrics are known and used on a recurring basis. IT will integrate data as needed, create analytical data models and perform data management. Business users want to filter the data, drill down into details, and use both graphics and tabular reports with related subjects typically grouped together in dashboards.

Guided data discovery tools such as QlikView, Tableau, TIBCO Spotfire, Birst and Logi Info are the best fit for this use case. These tools enable IT to source, integrate and manage security and privacy as needed to enable users to concentrate on analysis rather than data management. But they provide reports, graphics and dashboards oriented toward business users rather than IT. Although data discovery tools are often brought into enterprises to perform exploratory self-service BI, as we've discussed, a use case where IT manages the data and business people create their own BI applications using this data enables a positive business return on investment (ROI).

For larger enterprises, with existing investments in legacy BI platforms, IBM Cognos, SAP BusinessObjects, Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite, MicroStrategy, Information Builder's WebFOCUS and SAS Visual Analytics could be leveraged instead of acquiring new BI analytics tools. (A discussion on multiple BI use cases for large enterprises is covered later in this article.)

In this e-guide

- Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors
- Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products
- Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool
- MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics
- A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite
- Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

Packaged applications. SAP, Oracle, IBM, Information Builders and SAS offer BI analytics tools that best match these requirements. These BI packages may be corporate performance management or domain-specific applications that require significant BI analysis.

Oracle and SAP have leveraged their BI products, which also operate standalone, to offer operational reporting and analytics to their ERP customers. Enterprises that have invested in these applications often select those vendors' BI packages because they're tightly integrated, ensure quick time to market and have a positive ROI.

If an enterprise is using other application vendors or wishes to obtain BI packages from independent vendors, then IBM, Information Builders, SAS and Oracle provide excellent operational or domain-specific BI packaged applications.

Spreadsheet integration. Although many BI analytics tools integrate with spreadsheets, Microsoft has finally leveraged its Excel franchise and expanded its BI capabilities into Excel itself. Microsoft Power Pivot's in-memory columnar capabilities replace its proprietary Excel data store. Power Query, Power View and Power Map provide BI reporting, dashboards and visualization capabilities without requiring the user to ever leave native Excel while PowerBI works with Office 365.

//////
In this e-guide

- [Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors](#)
- [Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products](#)
- [Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool](#)
- [MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics](#)
- [A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite](#)
- [Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite](#)

BI product suites from IBM, SAP, Oracle, Information Builders and MicroStrategy can use spreadsheets as sources and enable spreadsheets to pull data from the BI tool. Data discovery tools such as Tableau, QlikTech and TIBCO Spotfire generally interact with spreadsheets in a one-way fashion of importing or querying spreadsheet data.

Querying and analysis. There are two analytical situations encountered. In the first scenario, business people don't know what data is needed prior to analysis. This is a true self-service BI use case with the business user performing ad-hoc analysis. This requires the user to know what data is available, how to access it, its quality and its completeness. This means the tools used must perform analysis and also data preparation or data blending. Qlik Sense, Tableau, TIBCO Spotfire and Logi Vision work well for this use case, provided that limited data preparation is necessary. Otherwise, third-party data preparation tools will be needed to extend capabilities. A tech-savvy business user would also be able to use guided discovery tools such as QlikView, Logi Info and Birst in this scenario.

In the second scenario, performance measures aren't defined, but data is known prior to analysis. The best practice is for IT to create a predefined data model to enable business users to concentrate on business analysis. The BI styles that best support this use case are online analytical processing (OLAP) or prebuilt in-memory columnar data models. Microsoft BI (Power Pivot), SAS, IBM, Oracle, MicroStrategy and Tableau are good choices, as they support

In this e-guide

▀ [Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors](#)

▀ [Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products](#)

▀ [Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool](#)

▀ [MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics](#)

▀ [A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite](#)

▀ [Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite](#)

accessing OLAP cubes and enable pivot-style analysis. These tools incorporate all the must-haves and many of the nice-to-have features noted in our third article, including context-based filters and visualizations, collaboration and publishing analysis for other business people and Office integration.

Supplemental data source analysis. Here, IT should pre-build data models with whatever data and performance measures are known and used on a recurring basis. Business users may need to supplement both data and measures as they perform each new business analysis. The amount of data preparation that will be required by business users will determine whether the BI tool selected should be a guided data analysis or a self-service data discovery tool.

If the business user needs to select only IT-managed data sources with little or no data preparation, then guided data analysis tools such as QlikView, Logi Info, Microsoft Power BI and Birst are the best fit. If more extensive data blending is necessary, then self-service data discovery tools such as Tableau, Qlik Sense, Logi Vision and Microsoft PowerPivot best fit this scenario.

The BI analytics tools mentioned all have the must-have features needed for their use cases while also providing nice-to-have features such as collaboration, advanced visualizations and in-memory analytics.

Visual-oriented analytics. For this use case, the best-fit tools are TIBCO Spotfire, SAS Visual Analytics, Tableau and Qlik (Qlik Sense and QlikView),

In this e-guide

- ▶ [Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors](#)
- ▶ [Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products](#)
- ▶ [Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool](#)
- ▶ [MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics](#)
- ▶ [A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite](#)
- ▶ [Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite](#)

along with MicroStrategy and Microsoft (PowerPivot and Power BI). Tableau, in particular, is dedicated to implementing data visualization best practices and assisting its customers to select the visualization that matches the type of analysis and data they're performing. For the most demanding advanced visualization uses -- when data scientists are using these capabilities coupled with statistical modeling -- TIBCO Spotfire and SAS Visual Analytics would be the top candidates. All of these products support either guided analysis and/or data discovery use cases, so selecting these tools will enable an enterprise to support multiple use cases.

For large enterprises with more than one BI use case. BI tool suites from SAP, IBM, Oracle, MicroStrategy and Information Builders support enterprise-grade development and management functionality and include a set of discrete BI tools that focus on specific use cases and BI tools styles. These suites provide dashboards, production reporting, ad-hoc query, scheduling, alerting and sometimes OLAP analysis. The suites offer varying degrees of support for cloud BI, mobile BI, data discovery, data visualization and self-service BI. They're catching up to the market leaders in these areas by expanding existing BI tools or integrating BI tools acquired from other vendors in their suites.

There are compelling advantages to IT-centric deployments such as the ability for an enterprise to implement data management, enforce privacy and security, meet scalability needs, and foster improved productivity by enabling business people to concentrate on analysis rather than gathering and cleaning data.

//////
In this e-guide

■ [Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors](#)

■ [Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products](#)

■ [Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool](#)

■ [MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics](#)

■ [A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite](#)

■ [Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite](#)

These BI tool suites have a long history in the BI market and a large customer base.

Because of their extensive functionality, BI suites from IBM, SAP and Oracle, for example, tend to be complex and require extensive product-specific knowledge. In fact, it's common for IT to have people dedicated to discrete tools in a BI suite; for example, they may have different people specializing in production reporting, dashboards and OLAP. The high IT resource costs coupled with tool costs means that these products tools are best suited for large enterprises, with SMBs seeking other alternatives as examined below.

For SMBs with more than one BI use case. The traditional BI product suites such as IBM, SAP and Oracle typically aren't the best fit for SMBs. These smaller organizations generally don't have dedicated IT resources to develop, manage and support these tools, nor do they have a large number of business users to justify the investment.

For SMBs with a variety of use cases, the pragmatic options are to either select different BI tools for each BI use case or select one or two tools that will be sufficient. Although the impression is that a single BI product suite is easier and more cost-effective than using multiple BI tools, often that isn't the case. That's especially true when the BI suite is really a group of different BI tools bundled together but not truly seamlessly integrated.

//////
In this e-guide

■ [Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors](#)

■ [Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products](#)

■ [Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool](#)

■ [MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics](#)

■ [A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite](#)

■ [Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite](#)

For example, to address the aforementioned tool selection options, you could either:

- Select a data discovery BI tool such as Tableau, QlikView or TIBCO Spotfire and deploy it in two ways. First, deploy it as a self-service BI tool for business users whose analytical needs match that use case. Second, create prebuilt dashboards with reports and visualizations, and deploy these BI applications for business users who have use cases where guided discovery or reporting tools fit.
- Select a BI tool for a specific BI use case and supplement it with Microsoft BI and Excel for other user cases that need guided discovery or reporting tools, as mentioned above.

Additional evaluation criteria

Once you've determined your BI use cases and selected a BI product or set of products that are a good fit for those use cases, there are a few additional items to consider before you make the final product selection:

Product ease of use. This is very subjective, as every vendor claims that its product is the easiest to use. The key to this helping you differentiate products is if the BI consumers in your use cases are also the evaluators. For example, it

//////
In this e-guide

- [Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors](#)
- [Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products](#)
- [Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool](#)
- [MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics](#)
- [A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite](#)
- [Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite](#)

isn't relevant to your selection if your BI developer finds a product easy to use but the business people who will be using a self-service BI tool don't.

Method of distribution (on premises versus software as a service). This criteria matters only if the selected products match your BI use cases. Some BI evaluations have gone astray by using this as the primary (or sole) criteria, and then finding out that the cloud BI product doesn't work for their BI use cases. This criteria is all about cost, not really about the BI users. Purchasing or subscribing to the wrong product doesn't save money. If the pool of BI products that match your BI use cases offers different methods of distribution, then this criteria is an excellent differentiator that may indeed result in lower total cost of ownership and provide the BI capabilities that your enterprise needs.

Too often, the BI tool an enterprise chooses is the one that gets the highest marks based on a long checklist of functions and features -- many which will never be used -- or is chosen with little regard to the users. Stop the madness. The best BI tool is one that's used by business people and is useful in supporting their jobs when they need reporting and analysis.

About the author

Rick Sherman is the founder of Athena IT Solutions, a consulting firm based in Maynard, Mass. He has more than 25 years of business intelligence and data warehousing experience, and has worked on more than 50 data warehouse and data mart implementations across many industry groups, sourcing data from a



In this e-guide

Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors

Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products

Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool

MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics

A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite

Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

variety of business applications. Sherman's book, "Business Intelligence Guidebook: From Data Integration to Analytics" was published in 2014. He can be found blogging at The Data Doghouse, or can be reached at rsherman@athena-solutions.com.



Next article

In this e-guide

- Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors
- Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products
- Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool
- MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics
- A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite
- Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products

Allen Bernard

Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics lets users view their most critical data via a live dashboard, create interactive reports and access their data on the go.

Microsoft Power BI and Power BI Pro are business analytics software as a service (SaaS) products that enable nontechnical business users to visualize and analyze data. Power BI connects to a broad set of data sources residing both on premises and in the cloud. Built for the Web, Power BI is accessible from any device and operating system with an HTML5-capable browser.

Power BI comes in a free, or freemium, version and paid version, Power BI Pro. The two SaaS analytics products are differentiated based on the type of data users can consume.

//////
In this e-guide

▀ [Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors](#)

▀ [Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products](#)

▀ [Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool](#)

▀ [MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics](#)

▀ [A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite](#)

▀ [Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite](#)

Power BI includes the following features:

- Connectors to a range of applications from SaaS partners such as Salesforce and Marketo, as well as hybrid connections to on-premises data.
- Customized dashboards that enable business users to create and share live data visualizations.
- Mobile apps for iOS, Windows and Android.

Power BI comes in Power BI for Desktop, as well as the Power BI app for Windows, iOS and Android. The Power BI Personal Gateway for the desktop allows users to keep dashboards and reports in sync with on-premises data. Power BI Gateway is available only with Power BI Pro.

The Power BI Analysis Services Connector lets users connect to on-premises data without moving it to the cloud. Users can also schedule the data in reports to refresh from on-premises sources.

Although designed for small and medium-size enterprise users, the free version of Power BI SaaS analytics allows anyone to start viewing dashboards and reports. Microsoft has reduced Power BI Pro to \$9.99 per user, per month, with a 10 GB per-user data cap.



In this e-guide

Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors

Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products

Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool

MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics

A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite

Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

Using Power BI dashboards, users can pull data from multiple sources, regardless of where the data lives, create a consolidated view of the data, and explore all their data using natural language queries while receiving answers in the form of charts and graphs.

Power BI comes with prebuilt dashboards and out-of-the-box connectors to reports for SaaS applications, including those from GitHub, Marketo, Microsoft Dynamics CRM , Salesforce, SendGrid and Zendesk. Microsoft recently added new applications from Microsoft Dynamics Marketing and Visual Studio Online.

Native mobile apps allow users to share and collaborate with colleagues. The iPad and iPhone apps can be downloaded from the Apple App Store.

Microsoft also introduced Power BI Designer, a free desktop tool that lets users connect to and analyze a wide variety of data sources to create interactive visual reports for secure publishing to Power BI. Customers can also use Microsoft Excel for ad hoc data analysis, analytics, layout customization and charting data.

A Power BI connector for SQL Server Analysis Services lets customers use Power BI without moving data to the cloud.

Power BI SaaS analytics is available free from Microsoft. Customers can upgrade to Power BI Pro for \$9.95 per month, per user.



In this e-guide

Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors

Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products

Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool

MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics

A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite

Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

Next article

Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool

Allen Bernard

Centralized BI and IT teams can use Birst to connect with decentralized teams on the business side. Learn more about the BI and predictive analytics tool.

Birst is a cloud-based BI and predictive analytics tool that automates the process of unifying a company's centrally managed enterprise data -- including data warehouses, data lakes and enterprise resource planning systems -- with user-generated data.

Birst enables centralized teams (BI and IT organizations) to collaborate with decentralized teams (business units). End users can work with data on their own through a variety of analytical styles on top of a unified business model, and BI teams can manage enterprise data assets while shifting the task of creating reports to the users.

The product includes a WYSIWYG dashboard editor, a key performance indicator creation wizard with visual indicators, automatic layouts, redesigned

In this e-guide

- Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors
- Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products
- Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool
- MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics
- A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite
- Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

filters with advanced filter options, and dashboard themes for full white labeling capabilities. Visual discovery enhancements include performance optimizations, enhanced formatting capabilities, predefined color palettes, chart properties, exporting, localization and embedding visualizations in Web applications.

A new iOS native application supports offline analysis, and new data can be loaded without interrupting access to reports and dashboards.

The Birst BI and predictive analytics tool connects to on-premises or cloud data sources or applications, and can extract data or issue live queries via a set of prebuilt connectors to popular applications such as Salesforce, SAP and Eloqua. Its automated data refinement (ADR) engine unifies, refines and organizes data from multiple sources into a user-ready data store (URDS). All ADR workflows are developed from a single Web browser without requiring any work in a different application or desktop-based tool.

The URDS is designed and optimized for relational online analytical processing-style analytics, providing a Kimball-style star schema with a multidimensional view of all data. In addition, Birst supports Type 1 and 2 slowly changing dimensions and conformed dimensions, and automatically manages snapshots and time-based transformations.

A two-tier analytics engine provides full ad-hoc analysis capabilities across multiple sources. Birst supports query federation and Live Access (real-time queries), enabling customers to leverage their existing investments in data

In this e-guide

- ▶ [Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors](#)
- ▶ [Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products](#)
- ▶ [Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool](#)
- ▶ [MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics](#)
- ▶ [A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite](#)
- ▶ [Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite](#)

warehouses, data marts and XML for Analysis cubes. On-premises analytical data stores are queried in real time, without having to first extract and load the data into the cloud.

A single set of business rules and definitions enable data governance and allow users to create their own custom measures and attributes. Managed data mashups enable administrators to create sandboxes (or virtual spaces) for business users to use and work in, while the administrator maintains the parent space on which the enterprise is run.

Birst subscriptions and support

The Birst predictive analytics tool is sold as a subscription that includes an annual platform fee, plus per-user fees. Additional options such as application-specific connectors, Solution Accelerators and language packs are sold separately. Although Birst pricing isn't published, the company provides flexible pricing terms for embedded customers to match their business model. It can also operate on premises, via a virtual appliance running the Open Virtualization Format.

Birst is sold directly by Birst Inc. or via technology partners and worldwide resellers. A 30-day limited trial is available.



In this e-guide

Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors

Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products

Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool

MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics

A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite

Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

Birst offers 24/7 customer support for critical issues for both cloud and appliance deployments and around-the-clock support during the week for all other issues. Premium support is offered through Birst's Business Analytics Competency Center offering. Support is included in subscription license agreements and isn't negotiated separately.



Next article

In this e-guide

- Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors
- Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products
- Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool
- MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics**
- A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite
- Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics

Allen Bernard

The MicroStrategy 10 analytics and BI platform lets users tap into data from a variety of sources to create and distribute customized reports. Plug-ins can extend functionality.

The MicroStrategy 10 enterprise analytics and BI platform enables organizations to build and deploy analytical applications, including personalized reports, real-time dashboards and mobile applications. These applications can be accessed and shared across Web, desktop and mobile interfaces.

MicroStrategy 10 blends and analyzes information from simple spreadsheets, relational databases, cloud-based data sources and Hadoop clusters. It then displays information and data using visualization tools and dashboards, and also allows users to utilize predictive analytics tools.

MicroStrategy 10 provides business users with data discovery and dashboard design capabilities, as well as a tool that allows them to automate distribution of reports without the support of IT.

//////
In this e-guide

■ [Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors](#)

■ [Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products](#)

■ [Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool](#)

■ [MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics](#)

■ [A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite](#)

■ [Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite](#)

In addition to connecting to various data sources, the MicroStrategy platform provides native gateways and drivers to connect to any enterprise resource -- from databases to mobile device management, Lightweight Directory Access Protocol, active directories, cloud applications and physical access control systems.

The MicroStrategy 10 software developer kit includes tools and utilities to help companies customize and extend MicroStrategy functionality, as well as embed analytics into a variety of interfaces. The platform can also connect with data integration tools, such as those from Informatica. MicroStrategy enables users to add functionality that may not come out of the box through various plug-ins, gateways and integration paths.

New features include:

- A desktop component, which gives business users a data discovery tool that integrates into the wider enterprise environment for governed data discovery;
- A complete user interface redesign in HTML5 (eliminating Flash);
- Advances in performance and speed with new in-memory parallel processing and partitioning; and
- A native Hadoop connector for access to Hadoop Distributed File System data.

In this e-guide

▀ [Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors](#)

▀ [Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products](#)

▀ [Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool](#)

▀ [MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics](#)

▀ [A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite](#)

▀ [Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite](#)

The MicroStrategy 10 enterprise analytics and BI platform is offered in five product versions:

- **Desktop**, which is a single-user, on-premise data discovery tool that lets users connect to, explore and visualize data on both Mac and PC.
- **Web**, which is a browser-based interface that allows business users to design and consume reports and dashboards.
- **Mobile**, which provides an interface for Apple iOS, Android and Blackberry devices that enables users to access analytics and mobile BI apps from a mobile device.
- **Architect**, which provides a set of development and migration tools that automate processes and manage the application through its lifecycle.
- **Server**, which is a full-featured server infrastructure designed to connect multiple data sources, support all analytics styles and scale to hundreds of thousands of users. Server also includes administration and monitoring tools to manage analytics deployments.

Pricing and support

MicroStrategy 10 includes several native gateways that enable integration with other corporate systems, applications and portals. The product runs on

//////
In this e-guide

▣ [Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors](#)

▣ [Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products](#)

▣ [Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool](#)

▣ [MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics](#)

▣ [A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite](#)

▣ [Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite](#)

Windows, Oracle Solaris, IBM AIX, Red Hat Enterprise Linux, Oracle Linux and SUSE Linux Enterprise Server. MicroStrategy also offers subscription-based licenses through the MicroStrategy Secure Cloud.

The enterprise analytics and BI platform can be purchased on a named-user basis or by core CPU licensing, and can be deployed on premises or via the MicroStrategy Secure Cloud.

On-premises pricing is as follows:

- Desktop is \$600 per named user.
- Web and mobile are \$600 per named user, or \$300,000 per CPU core.
- Architect is \$5,000 per named user.
- Server is \$1,200 per named user, or \$600,000 per CPU core.

Note: For Web and Server, each MicroStrategy CPU core typically supports between 500 and 1,000 users.

Cloud pricing is as follows:

- Desktop is \$200 per named user.
- Web and mobile are \$200 per named user, or \$100,000 per CPU core.



In this e-guide

Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors

Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products

Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool

MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics

A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite

Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

- Architect is \$1,670 per named user.
- Server is \$400 per named user, or \$200,000 per CPU core.

Note: Prices don't include infrastructure, hosting or support costs.

Both on-premises and cloud offerings of MicroStrategy 10 are sold direct or through software resellers, technology partners and OEMs.

A MicroStrategy enterprise evaluation edition includes a 30-day free trial and a 60-minute consultation that lets users try the entire platform. In addition, individuals can download a free trial of MicroStrategy Desktop.

MicroStrategy offers four technical support plans for on premises: Elite, Priority, Extended and Standard. MicroStrategy Professional Services is available to help with on-site engagements. For its cloud offering, MicroStrategy provides Pilot, Premier and Elite support.



Next article

In this e-guide

- Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors
- Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products
- Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool
- MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics
- A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite
- Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite

Allen Bernard

SAP BusinessObjects BI platform provides users with self-service access to information to support the decision-making process. Find out what's different in version 4.1.

Designed for organizations of all sizes, SAP BusinessObjects BI suite enables business users to view, sort and analyze BI data on any device and across all platforms. The current version, SAP BusinessObjects BI 4.1, provides improved interoperability across the BI suite, expanded mobile BI functionalities and data discovery with managed self-service BI.

Additional BusinessObjects BI suite features include the following:

- Uses 64-bit technology to take advantage of modern hardware and memory.
- Improved data connectivity, including support for more than 140 data sources and connectivity to Hadoop Hive, Impala and MongoDB NoSQL DBMS.
- Native SAP HANA platform support.

In this e-guide

Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors

Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products

Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool

MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics

A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite

Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

- Native SAP Business Warehouse support.
- Extensible BI suite using software development kits across the suite, including a mobile BI software developer's kit for custom mobile applications and deployment.
- Enhanced BI mobility to deploy mobile services and manage all security settings directly from the central management console.

Total cost of ownership improvements in this latest version include the following:

- Support for all SAP BI clients on a single platform.
- Cloud-based BI deployment options.
- Near-zero downtime backup method.
- Parallel patching.
- Embedded real-time monitoring.
- An improved auditing engine that collects insights into how people use the product.

The key components of the SAP BusinessObjects BI products suite include:

- **Reporting:** SAP Crystal Reports, SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence

In this e-guide

Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors

Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products

Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool

MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics

A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite

Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

- **Dashboards and application building:** SAP BusinessObjects Design Studio, SAP Dashboards
- **Data discovery and visualization:** SAP BusinessObjects Analysis, SAP BusinessObjects Explorer, SAP Lumira (stand-alone as well)
- **Deployment and administration:** SAP BusinessObjects BI Platform

BusinessObjects BI suite runs on Windows, Linux and Unix platforms. Products are available through a licensing model with named user and/or concurrent session-based licenses. Both named users and concurrent session-based licenses include content viewing and content authoring rights.

Licenses for the SAP BusinessObjects BI Suite include Mobile BI capability, SAP Lumira, SAP Lumira Server and a run-time license of SAP HANA for running SAP Lumira Server at no extra charge. SAP doesn't license by hardware metrics. The company offers perpetual software licenses and subscription-based pricing for BI offerings in the cloud.

BusinessObjects is sold directly by SAP and through independent software vendors, resellers, partners and system integrators, and can be purchased as a full suite, with some BI solutions available stand-alone. Contact SAP for pricing. Standard and Enterprise support options are available, as are free full-featured trial versions of SAP BusinessObjects BI suite.

//////
In this e-guide

- ▣ Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors
- ▣ Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products
- ▣ Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool
- ▣ MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics
- ▣ A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite
- ▣ Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

Next article

In this e-guide

- Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors
- Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products
- Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool
- MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics
- A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite
- Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

Allen Bernard

Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite enables users to access information through interactive dashboards, search and mobile devices.

- Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite 11g consists of several BI products that support dashboards, scorecards, production reporting, ad hoc analysis, multidimensional online analytical processing (OLAP) and predictive analytics. The suite enables a wide range of BI use cases, including IT-centric reporting, self-service BI and advanced analysis, and comprises the following tools:
- Oracle Business Intelligence Enterprise Edition (OBIEE) 11g
- Oracle Business Intelligence Publisher 11g
- Oracle Scorecard and Strategy Management
- Oracle Essbase and Oracle Essbase Analytics Link

In this e-guide

- Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors
- Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products
- Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool
- MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics
- A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite
- Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite

Oracle BI Server and Oracle Essbase are the key server components of Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite that enable data access and data management. Oracle BI Server supports access to a wide variety of data sources spanning databases, file structures, applications and services, while Oracle Essbase supports multidimensional OLAP analytics. The foundation of these servers is the Common Enterprise Information Model (CEIM), which supports mapping these data sources into a managed model that can be leveraged by the suite's end-user components.

OBIEE supports the creation of dashboards and reports and the ability to include advanced data visualizations, enable collaboration, and support data searches. Ad hoc queries can be used for business analysis or to iteratively develop dashboards or reports. BI developers can leverage the CEIM to improve productivity and better manage analytics.

Oracle BI Publisher is Oracle's enterprise reporting server for generating, scheduling and delivering reports and documents. Similar to OBIEE, BI Publisher can access the Oracle Server and CEIM for report creation. Publisher also includes an alerting engine that captures and distributes notifications via multiple channels in response to predefined business events and data exceptions.

Oracle Scorecard and Strategy Management supports the creation of scorecards that incorporate key performance indicators (KPIs) and strategic goals that can be defined, monitored and distributed to the business. Scorecard

//////
In this e-guide

■ [Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors](#)

■ [Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products](#)

■ [Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool](#)

■ [MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics](#)

■ [A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite](#)

■ [Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite](#)

metadata objects and visualizations, which are treated like other OBIEE 11g metadata objects, can be embedded in dashboards and ad hoc query and analysis views and monitored as alerts.

BI search can be used to securely explore existing content based on full indexing of dashboards, analyses, views, prompts, KPIs, scorecards, publisher reports, agents, actions, catalogs and folders. Search results can be secured via single sign-on integration. Faceted Search enables information exploration by giving users a context-based starting point for analysis by passing search context to open objects prefiltered to matching keywords.

Oracle Business Intelligence Mobile, which is available from Apple iTunes, lets users send notifications and alerts via their iPhones and iPads without compromising security.

Oracle Enterprise Manager Integration enables an Oracle BI system administrator to manage a multiserver enterprise system from a single interface.

Pricing and support information for Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite is available from Oracle.

In this e-guide

▀ [Comparing BI analytics tools from the leading vendors](#)

▀ [Exploring Microsoft Power BI SaaS analytics products](#)

▀ [Examining the Birst BI and predictive analytics tool](#)

▀ [MicroStrategy 10 promotes self-service analytics](#)

▀ [A look at SAP BusinessObjects BI suite](#)

▀ [Insight into Oracle Business Intelligence Foundation Suite](#)

About the author

Allen Bernard is a freelance business and technology writer. From 2003-2012 he served as the managing editor of CIOUpdate.com and numerous other technology websites. Since 2000, Bernard has written, assigned and edited thousands of articles that focus on the intersection of technology and business.

In addition to content marketing and public relations, he also now writes for DataInformed.com, CIO.com, the Economist Intelligence Unit, InformationWeek and other high-quality publications. His current project is co-authoring a book on Technology Business Management for the TBM Council. Originally from the Boston area Allen now calls Columbus, Ohio, home.