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Bring Business Intelligence to All Your Users with SAP BusinessObjects Explorer

Become a Higher-Performing Organization Ready to React Quickly in a Competitive, Volatile Environment

All employees in your organization are responsible for making sound decisions, and they must base their decisions on relevant and timely information. When your users encounter difficulties accessing and using key business data, it can have a lasting impact on the organization's performance and its bottom line.

Although many companies implement business intelligence (BI) solutions to fill this need, the majority of information workers are still underserved by traditional BI tools – many users are left without access to the right data to make informed decisions. Difficulty of use and longer-than-expected training periods, which many information workers don't have the patience for, are leading reasons behind poor user adoption for BI tools. Instead, many users turn to higher cost, non-self-service channels – such as IT or business analysts – to get their business questions answered.

This reliance on IT is taking its toll. Users are frustrated by time delays, IT is overburdened and under-resourced, and even when basic data needs are met, they tend to suffer issues of timeliness. This results in underperforming and non-competitive organizations in which IT typically takes the brunt of complaints for poor access to information.

Bottom line: Your organization needs a way to bring BI to all information workers while reducing the burden on IT. To help you achieve this objective, SAP has introduced SAP BusinessObjects Explorer, a solution that brings together search and navigation capabilities from the SAP BusinessObjects business intelligence solutions portfolio with the in-memory technology of SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse Accelerator (SAP NetWeaver BW Accelerator; see sidebar).

Familiar, Self-Service Access to Information

SAP BusinessObjects Explorer allows users to search with familiar keywords to find the data needed to answer critical business questions. Users don't need

special training or skills, and they don't have to go through IT to access the data. Once users find the relevant information they need, they can then explore the data in a visually rich navigation window, drilling down into specific areas for further investigation.

Let's run through an example that highlights the advantages of SAP BusinessObjects Explorer for a typical information worker.

A German-based sales executive for a fast food company is interested in comparing food item sales in Germany to the company's US counterparts. Employing familiar business language terms, she types the phrase "Germany sales compared to US" into her SAP BusinessObjects Explorer screen – a similar experience to searching the Web – to pull up relevant information from SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse (SAP NetWeaver BW).

SAP BusinessObjects Explorer quickly displays the sales executive's search results in order of relevance based on a scoring algorithm. She can immediately access the results to further explore additional context-relevant details (see **Figure 1** on the next page). For example, by simply clicking on the sales figures



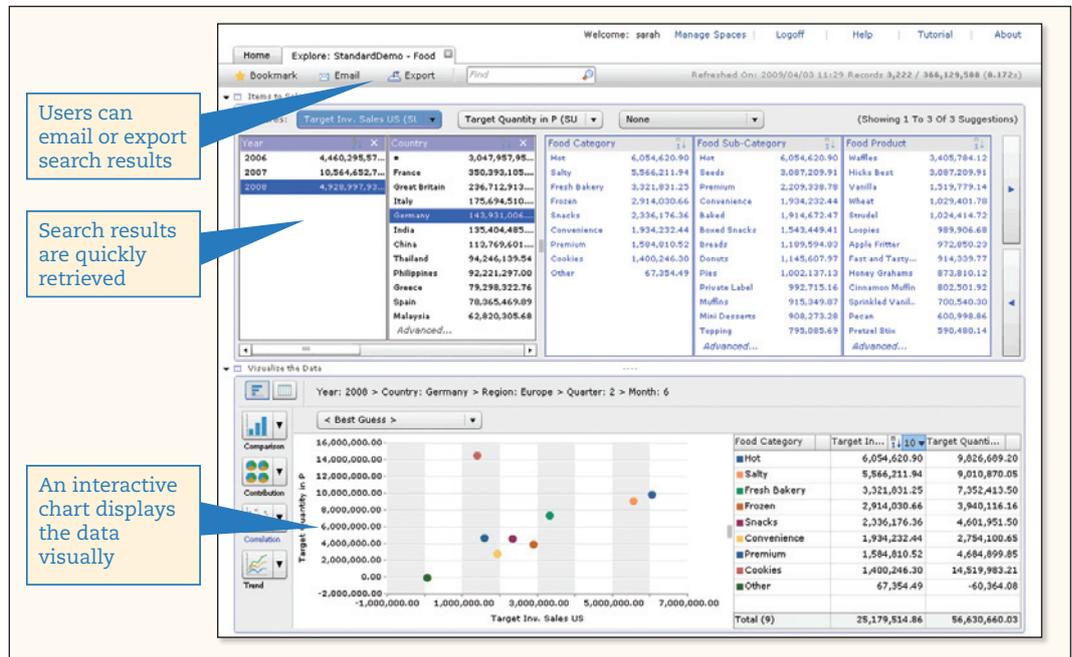
Dan Kearnan (dan.kearnan@sap.com) is the Director of SAP Business Intelligence at SAP Americas. With more than 15 years of experience working with large and midsize companies to help define and plan their business intelligence (BI) strategies, he brings extensive knowledge of BI, enterprise resource planning, and data warehousing applications to his current role at SAP. Dan works within a larger group to help shape, define, and communicate SAP's BI and information management strategies.

SAP BusinessObjects Explorer Enables Fast Information Retrieval and Data Exploration

Slow query performance and unpredictable response times are consistently among the top complaints from users who work with business intelligence tools. But SAP BusinessObjects Explorer alleviates these problems.

Since high performance thresholds deliver significant productivity gains to both information workers and IT, SAP BusinessObjects Explorer leverages the performance and scalability of SAP NetWeaver BW Accelerator. This combination enables query response times that are five times faster than tuned queries and up to 100 times faster when compared to non-tuned BI queries. These rapid response times provide users with much needed consistency and predictability.

FIGURE 1 ▶ Using a simple keyword search, an employee can easily pull up data through SAP BusinessObjects Explorer



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identified through the search, she can view an automatically generated, interactive visual chart. A “Best Guess” control independently chooses the most relevant dimension for the data – in this case, a correlation chart.

The sales executive can cut and paste search links directly from SAP BusinessObjects Explorer to securely share insights with her colleagues via email and instant messaging applications. She can also export the data to a CSV file.

The key here is simplicity. An information worker doesn’t need to understand where the data is located or how it is structured. And unlike traditional BI tools, no pre-existing reports or metrics are required to initiate the search. Your users simply use relevant keyword searches, based on indexed metadata, to receive instant access to information.

Relieving the Burden on IT

We’ll now turn our attention to the IT department, whose support is essential to drive the business changes required to create high-performing and BI-savvy organizations.

With IT empowerment in mind, SAP BusinessObjects Explorer can be deployed easily with a simple and fast activation process. The solution is packaged with the SAP NetWeaver BW Accelerator appliance and delivers pre-installed software with standard, 64-bit, Intel blade servers. IT needs only to plug the appliance into existing SAP NetWeaver BW instances, deploy the solution, and determine which InfoCubes to expose.

SAP BusinessObjects Explorer also easily accommodates expanding volumes of data and users. IT no longer needs to perform mundane, low-value-added tasks to optimize the system. Instead, in-memory indexing reduces the need for manual performance tuning – a key benefit, considering that a significant amount of IT efforts in traditional BI projects are allocated to building and maintaining aggregates needed to handle an ever-expanding amount of data and number of users.

Conclusion

In this volatile economy, it’s critical that organizations provide all users with immediate answers to “on-the-fly” questions, a deeper data-driven understanding of their business, and instant access to relevant information. IT departments play a role as an agile business partner by reacting quickly to these requests for timely access to information in a cost-effective manner.

SAP BusinessObjects Explorer extends the reach of BI to users whose needs have previously been underserved. With immediate insight into critical data, information workers can intuitively explore business information quickly and independently, enabling a better-informed workforce that makes sound and timely decisions. The result: a higher-performing organization that’s ready to react quickly in competitive, unpredictable environments.

To learn more about SAP BusinessObjects Explorer, call your SAP representative or visit www.sap.com. ■