

Business Intelligence from Barter to Buffet: Using SAP Business Objects Explorer



Applies to:

SAP BW 3.x & SAP BI Net Weaver 2004s. For more information, visit the [Business Objects homepage](#).

Summary

This article discusses the movement of Business Intelligence from the barter system (offerings from the IT to create reports) to buffet system (self-service BI). It gives an insight into SAP BusinessObjects Explorer explaining the nomenclature, benefits and various types of Explorer. It also explains the need of the business to use SAP BusinessObjects Explorer.

Author: Vikram Srivastava

Company: Infosys Technologies Limited

Created on: 12 May 2010

Author Bio



Vikram Srivastava works as Technology Analyst with Infosys Technologies Limited. He has experience on various BW Implementation/Support Projects in both SAP BW 3.5 and SAP BW 7.0.

Table of Contents

Who needs SAP BusinessObjects Explorer?	3
Need of SAP Business Objects Explorer.....	4
Information	4
Intuitive Experience.....	5
Speed.....	5
Nomenclature	6
SAP BusinessObjects Polestar	6
SAP BusinessObjects Explorer.....	6
SAP BusinessObjects Explorer, accelerated version	6
Explorer in the Cloud.....	6
Architecture.....	7
How to connect SAP BusinessObjects Explorer to BW Accelerator	8
How to load external data to SAP BW Accelerator.....	9
Advantages of SAP BusinessObjects Explorer Accelerated Version	10
Advantages of Explorer in the Cloud.....	11
Inference.....	11
Related Content.....	13
Copyright.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Introduction

With the day by day growth of Business Intelligence and its expanding use among the business group, it is today a key decision maker in any organization. But the time required to turn around a requirement with the data to a report is sometimes quite high with the involvement of IT and Processes.

This would be fine in most cases, but sometimes it's really not desirable. Business is moving towards 'NOW'. It cannot wait for creation of reports to make key decisions. To cater to such self service requirements there is SAP BusinessObjects Explorer.



SAP BusinessObjects Explorer is a search and exploration tool that businesses can use to obtain the correct information at the right time without bypassing the security and control over the information.

It can give the business an answer to many of their questions on the fly.

Who needs SAP BusinessObjects Explorer?

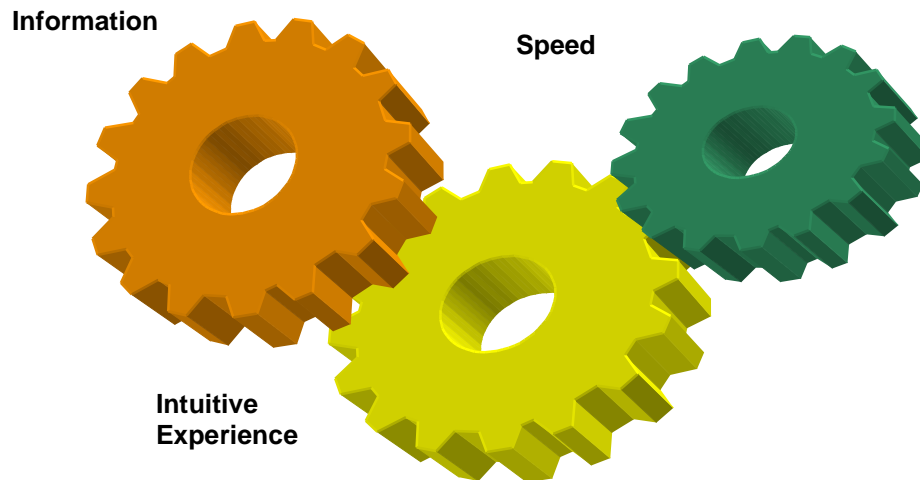
Often all users need interactive and speedy information. User groups include:

- casual information workers
- users wanting more of a self-service environment
- users needing information for critical business decisions.

Need of SAP Business Objects Explorer

The need for SAP BusinessObjects Explorer can be divided into sections:

- information
- speed
- Intuitive experience.



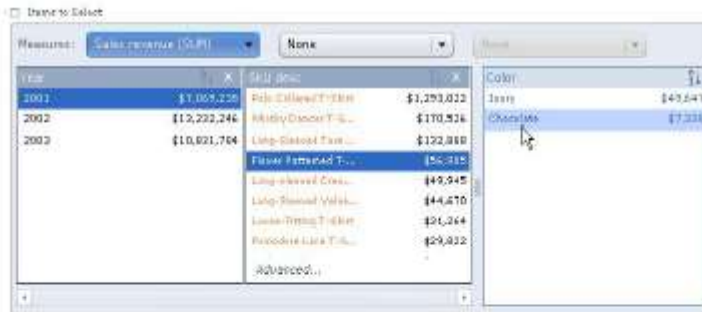
Information

This talks about the need of business to get the correct and trusted information. This also includes the need of business to report on any corporate information.



Intuitive Experience

As this is the need of the business, it should be easy to access and understandable.



City	Sales revenue	n
Austin	\$7,940	10
Los Angeles	\$5,426	
San Francisco	\$4,917	
Washington	\$3,743	
Dallas	\$3,550	
Miami	\$3,391	
Colorado Springs	\$1,727	
Total (10)	\$56,985	



It should be graphical and have a good look and feel interface, not making it difficult for the business.

Speed

This is a key factor which drives the business need for SAP BusinessObjects Explorer.



This explains the need of business where they need the information on the fly.

Nomenclature

Quite often we are confused between the different names in the BusinessObjects Explorer world.



SAP BusinessObjects Polestar

- First full release = XI Release 2
- Second full release = XI 3.1, released in January

SAP BusinessObjects Explorer

- New core name for all variations of Polestar as of 11MAY09.
- Also the name for the standalone (Universe based) version of Explorer.

SAP BusinessObjects Explorer, accelerated version

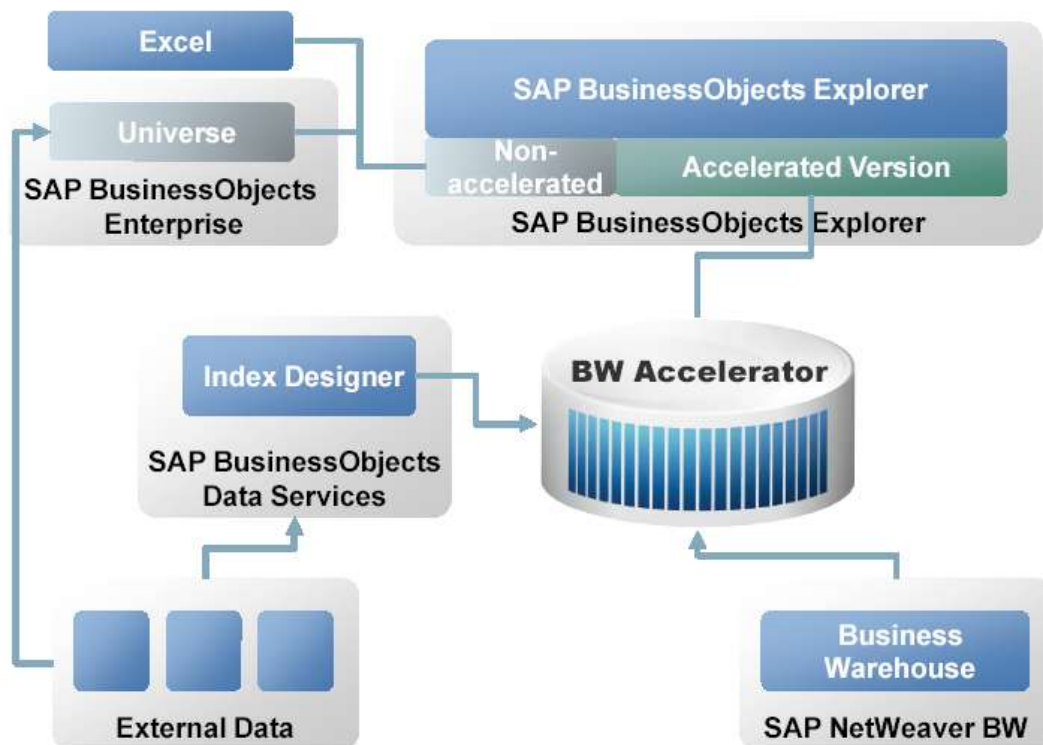
This is used for SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse (SAP NetWeaver BW).

Explorer in the Cloud

Explorer on Demand

Architecture

The diagram below diagram gives an overview of the architecture of BusinessObjects Explorer Accelerated version.



The high speed of the SAP BusinessObjects Explorer in the Accelerated version can be attributed to the SAP BW Accelerator.

SAP BW Accelerator uses a search engine 'TREX' which helps getting the information on-the-fly.

Owing to this now, SAP BusinessObjects Explorer can directly access SAP BW Info Cubes for "Search and Exploration".

These external data sources can also be accessed using SAP BusinessObjects Data Services which integrates with the SAP BW Accelerator for fast search. This skips the need of the additional semantic layer/ Universe.

Thus intuitive exploration capabilities start holding good for external data sets as well.

How to connect SAP BusinessObjects Explorer to BW Accelerator

SAP BW Accelerate is a standalone plug-and-play device.

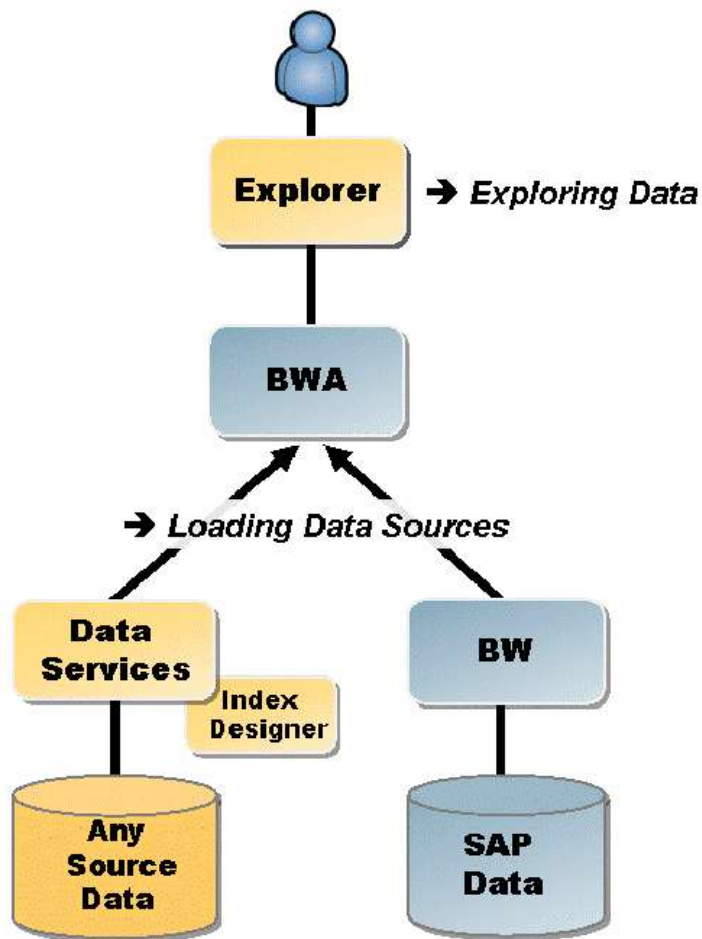


This connection can be configured using SAP BusinessObjects Enterprise Central Management Console (CMC).

How to load external data to SAP BW Accelerator

The external data can be loaded to SAP BW Accelerator using an additional interface in the data services called Index Designer. Index Designer is an add-on to SAP BusinessObjects Data Services.

It enables modeling of accelerator indexes based on any external data sources.



It follows the steps as extracts data, transforms it, cleanses it and then loads it to the BW Accelerator.

This helps in fast search on external data as well as a fast search on the data residing within the BW system.

This interface has various modeling options, including joining the tables. However, this data cannot be used in any other place than Explorer.

Advantages of SAP BusinessObjects Explorer Accelerated Version

Highlighted below are the advantages of the accelerated version of SAP BusinessObjects Explorer:



- performance speedup factor between 100 and 1000
- no change in BI user experience (transparent to users)
- self-service BI for knowledge workers
- ability to answer investigative questions
- further reduce IT and report author backlog
- ability to get fast facts
- understand new data
- share the data by using options like export to excel.

Advantages of Explorer in the Cloud

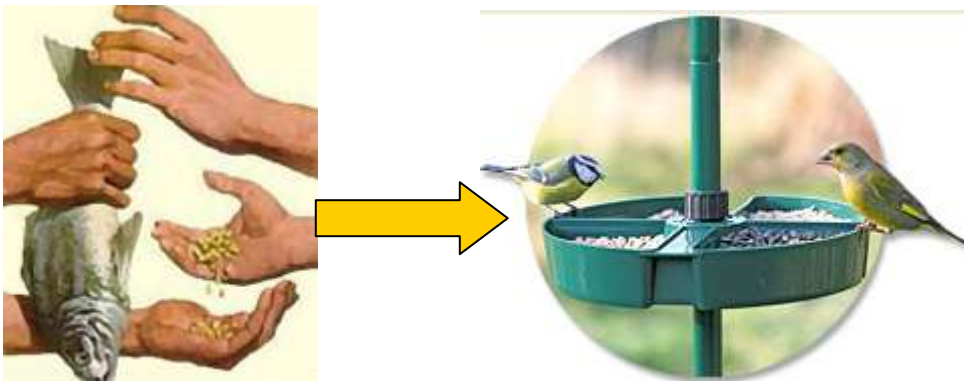
Highlighted below are the advantages of Explorer in the cloud:



- self-service BI for the masses
- ability to answer quick questions
- further reduce IT and report author backlog
- ability to get fast facts
- understand new data
- user community driven tool adoption
- no Installation efforts
- no Administration efforts.

Inference

Thus gradually the Business Intelligence world is moving from the barter to buffet system where business is urging for less of operational issues and timelines and move towards more of self service.



So now using familiar business key words business can get an answer to any question. The reach of exploration can now be with mountains of data.

Related Content

[SAP BusinessObjects Explorer, Accelerated Version](#)

[SAP BusinessObjects Explorer](#)

[BusinessObjects Wiki](#)

For more information, visit the [Business Objects homepage](#)

Disclaimer and Liability Notice

This document may discuss sample coding or other information that does not include SAP official interfaces and therefore is not supported by SAP. Changes made based on this information are not supported and can be overwritten during an upgrade.

SAP will not be held liable for any damages caused by using or misusing the information, code or methods suggested in this document, and anyone using these methods does so at his/her own risk.

SAP offers no guarantees and assumes no responsibility or liability of any type with respect to the content of this technical article or code sample, including any liability resulting from incompatibility between the content within this document and the materials and services offered by SAP. You agree that you will not hold, or seek to hold, SAP responsible or liable with respect to the content of this document.