IBM® Cognos® 8 BI PowerPlay FAQ

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Value

What is IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay?

IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay offers existing IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 customers a smooth migration to IBM Cognos 8 BI. IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay delivers the same, familiar, and well-loved user experience within the IBM Cognos 8 BI environment, and customers benefit from the administration experience of the Cognos 8 platform.

Why is IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay important to customers?

For the business user, IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay offers those members of an organization who are familiar with IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 the same user interface experience. IBM Cognos 8 BI also provides them with a pathway to IBM Cognos 8 BI. This will make it easy for them to offer additional capabilities to these users, such as IBM Cognos 8 BI reporting.

For IT, this product provides the benefits of common administration, including a single security environment, a single content store, a single portal environment, and zero-footprint user administration.

What are the highlights and benefits of IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay?

Overall, migrating to IBM Cognos 8 BI enables organizations to extend their existing PowerCube investments with more advanced reporting capabilities, such as bursting and scheduling of cube-based reports, extended formatting, improved drill-through, and enhancements like Transformer 8.

Product strategy

There are so many choices of products that can be used for analysis. How do I know which one to choose? How does the PowerPlay Studio fit in with the rest of Cognos products?

IBM Cognos 8 BI offers a full range of BI capabilities (reporting, analysis, dashboards, and scorecarding) accessible through the Web, and via Office, search, and mobile devices to help organizations address the vital questions about their performance, such as "how are we doing?" and "why?"

IBM Cognos 8 BI ensures that all user communities in an organization leverage the task-based capabilities to use information how, when, and where they need to. This approach extends down to a finer granularity: users need to select the right analysis capabilities to fit their needs in terms of ease of use, degree of interactivity, and analytical power.

Analysis tools are used by different users in a variety of ways.

For example, here are three scenarios:

- Casual consumers typically view reports written for them by others. These reports quickly communicate pertinent business facts, and because they are reports written against OLAP cubes, the information is readily available in summarized form. This offloads reporting from the data warehouse, as well as transactional applications.
- Managers need to easily explore information to discover relevant trends and exceptions relating to their business domain. This is most easily achieved by providing them with dimensionally structured information.
- Analysts perform hard core, in-depth analysis, in order to create business models to send proposals back to the business.

Using these examples, let's explore how our capabilities address these different needs.

For the report author, IBM Cognos 8 BI reporting provides maximum reporting power with the Report Studio Professional authoring mode. This functionality provides the most powerful layout and formatting environment to create reports based on cubes.

For managers, the express authoring mode in Report Studio provides cross-tab analysis and the ability to easily create time-based metrics.

Additionally, for analysts, the Analysis Studio in IBM Cognos 8 BI is a powerful analysis interface that is capable of more advanced comparative analysis than IBM Cognos PowerPlay.

These three groups of users, who love the user interface of IBM Cognos PowerPlay, will see that IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay provides the traditional IBM Cognos PowerPlay user interface on the IBM Cognos 8 platform. IBM Cognos PowerPlay focuses more on ease of use than absolute analytical power, and is particularly well-suited for exploration, in addition to satisfying many reporting and analysis needs.

For existing customers who want guidance on selecting the capabilities that best fit their needs and skills of user communities, see the Migration Planning Advisor.

What are your plans for PowerPlay Studio and Analysis Studio? Do you anticipate that they might be integrated into one product or will they remain separate?

The introduction of IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay provides our existing customers with the best of both worlds – the user interface their business community loves, the additional capabilities of IBM Cognos 8 BI that they want, and the advantages of the Cognos 8 platform that IT loves. In this way, customers can leverage their expertise and significant investment in IBM Cognos PowerPlay skills while reaping the value of the Cognos 8 platform.

Adopting IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay is one of many steps for customers on their journey to performance management. IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay enables a smooth migration to IBM Cognos 8 BI. Business users familiar with IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 can use IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay immediately. With their primary needs met, many clients then consider the broader capabilities that IBM Cognos 8 BI has to offer, which makes it easy for them to take their next step on their journey.

In IBM Cognos 8 BI, Cognos addresses a much fuller range of BI capabilities than we did with IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7, while leveraging the modern, open Cognos 8 platform. In doing so, capabilities have been organized around the needs of different user personas and provide an easy way for users to navigate across those capabilities as they drill and explore the data. In addition, in IBM Cognos 8 BI, these capabilities are available on common business model to deliver complete and consistent data from across heterogeneous data sources including relational, OLAP, and modern sources like XML. In IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7, the business users experience was partitioned by the type of capability and by data source, for example PowerPlay for OLAP cubes, Impromptu/IWR for relational databases. Now, in IBM Cognos 8 BI, you can report off both relational and OLAP sources - something that is not possible in IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7.

Vision

What is the overall Cognos OLAP vision and product roadmap?

The overall OLAP vision remains unchanged – to deliver a superior customer experience for analysis, navigation, exploration, and scenario modeling. Similar to our approach in providing a task-oriented user interface for query, reporting, analysis, we provide task-oriented OLAP to address the full range of analysis needs in our customer base.

The combination of PowerCubes and the Cognos 8 platform ensures that customers can address any requirements for analytical reporting, trending, and slice and dice analysis. With the addition of IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay, the exploration and navigation analysis experience of IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 is maintained and is now available in IBM Cognos 8 BI. With TM1, the breadth of analysis capabilities is further expanded by enabling customers to address more what-if scenario modeling types of analysis.

Cognos now offers multiple OLAP engines (PowerCubes, TM1, and Planning). In addition, there are the IBM DB2 CubeViews and Alphablox offerings. There are also multiple analysis experiences which can be found in Analysis Studio, PowerPlay Studio, Cognos Analysis for Microsoft Excel (Café), and Executive Viewer.

Our sales representatives can help you understand how to best answer the needs of your organization in this area.

Product details

If the PowerPlay Studio in IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay is intended only to support IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 to IBM Cognos 8 BI migration efforts, does that mean it will have a limited lifespan?

IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay offers IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 users the interfaces they use on a daily basis in the Cognos 8 platform and provides a door to the richness and new functionality available in IBM Cognos 8 BI. Administrators can benefit from low migration costs and virtually no end-user training as they rationalize their environments and administration interfaces. They can then plan on introducing additional Cognos 8 capabilities to their end-users, as it makes good business sense.

As with IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7, there is no published end-of-life date for IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay. The plan is plan to support and enhance it as long as customers demand it and it makes business sense.

What is the role of Analysis Studio in the Cognos 8 solution?

Analysis Studio is the preferred interface for business analysts – since it goes beyond IBM Cognos PowerPlay capabilities and, like other Cognos 8 studios, can access dimensionally-modeled relational (DMR) data sources.

IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 customers love the interface in IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7. IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay provides the interface they love, all the value of the Cognos 8 platform, and access to the additional capabilities in IBM Cognos 8 BI.

What functionality does the PowerPlay Studio in IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay have in common with Analysis Studio? How are they different?

An IBM Cognos PowerPlay user may wonder if Analysis Studio is the same as the IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 web functionality. Analysis Studio provides deep comparative analysis, which IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay Studio does not offer. The PowerPlay Studio in IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay offers a rich exploration experience.

One of the biggest differences between Analysis Studio and the PowerPlay Studio in IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay is that Analysis Studio enables analysis of information independent of where your data is stored. This means that you can analyze and report against online analytical processing (OLAP) dimensionally-aware relational sources.

IBM Cognos PowerPlay users who are familiar with IBM Cognos PowerPlay web functionality and exploration capabilities, and who expect the same functionality and exploration capabilities in Cognos 8, should consider moving to IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay.

IBM Cognos PowerPlay users, who perform analysis, or deep comparative analysis, use unbalanced hierarchies, or use large data sets will find that Analysis Studio is well suited for their business needs. Consider migrating any IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 applications that would benefit from this functionality to Analysis Studio when the time is right for your business.

What version of IBM Cognos PowerPlay do customers have to be on to migrate to IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay?

Customers must be running IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 version 4 in order to migrate to IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay.

What should customers who are running earlier versions of PowerPlay do to upgrade to Cognos Series 7 version 4?

Customers with active Cognos Support contracts should visit http://support.cognos.com and, from the Customer Resource Center, in the Hot Topic tab, click Product Downloads. The download is available for IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 version 4.

Customers without a Cognos Support contract should visit http://support.cognos.com/support/about/renewal.html. Please contact a Cognos Support Renewal Representative in your respective region to discuss reinstating their Cognos Support contract to access the product upgrade that they will require.

What, if any, new functionality is gained when moving to the PowerPlay Studio in IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay from IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7?

IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay users have the advantage of access to additional capabilities in IBM Cognos 8 BI such as the Professional report authoring mode in Report Studio, richer drill-through capabilities, and scheduling and event management capabilities in the Cognos 8 platform.

Administrators will be able to manage IBM Cognos PowerPlay services, cubes, and report settings from within the Cognos 8 zero-footprint administration console. In addition, administrators will be able to take advantage of all of Cognos 8 administration, lowering maintenance costs, and accessing the Cognos 8 infrastructure for scalability and performance.

When used in conjunction with cubes created in Transformer 8, IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay can also leverage the security from a Cognos 8 namespace, as an additional alternative to an IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 namespace.

For more information about new features, see the IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay *Migration and Administration Guide*, which will be available with the product.

IBM Cognos 8 BI is a web-only environment. What happens to the Windows-based analysis that is available in IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7?

IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay Client is a Windows-based solution that supports the analysis of PowerCubes while offline/disconnected or with a client/server connection to remote (server based) PowerCubes, just like IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7.

What, if any, existing functionality is lost when I move to IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay?

The PowerPlay Studio in IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay offers end-users the IBM Cognos PowerPlay web user interface they are familiar with, with no significant change to functionality when accessing PowerCubes. Unlike IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7, IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay does not access third party OLAP sources, such as Microsoft SQL Server Analysis Services or Oracle Essbase. Customers who have these OLAP sources are encouraged to migrate to IBM Cognos 8 BI

The PowerPlay Studio in IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay is fully integrated into Cognos Connection and Content Manager, like any other Cognos 8 studio.

For more information about specific functionality, see the IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay *Migration and Administration Guide*, which will be available with the product.

Where can I find more information?

Supported customers can obtain more information from the Customer Resource Center (http://support.cognos.com/index.html) or you can contact your sales representative.

Do you have any IBM Cognos PowerPlay customers that have upgraded to Analysis Studio? If so, can you give me some examples? Who can I talk to about this?

Yes, some customers have upgraded. For more information, see the Customer Resource Center or contact your sales representative.

If customers don't migrate to IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay can they still migrate to IBM Cognos 8 BI?

Yes. Customers can migrate IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 reports to Report Studio and/or Analysis Studio. IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 will continue to interoperate with IBM Cognos 8 BI exactly as it does today.

Now that PPES is a service in IBM Cognos 8 BI, what does that mean to me?

IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay is administered in the same way as any other Cognos 8 service. Unlike IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7, IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay does not have an independent web gateway or dispatcher, nor a separate administration tool.

Will PowerPlay Studio perform at the same speed and efficiency as IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7?

Performance parity is our goal. While the Cognos 8 platform is very different, Cognos' goal is to strive for comparable performance and scalability with IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 version 4.

Resources, Services, and Education

What additional online resources are available to help customers move to IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay?

Customers are encouraged to visit the Customer Resource Center, as there is more information on migration and numerous on-line resources available. Visit http://support.cognos.com and search for migration.

If I am an IBM Cognos PowerPlay customer who just wants to migrate to IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay, are there services that would still be relevant to me?

Cognos Professional Services have a range of programs to help ensure successful migrations by our clients from IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 to IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay. Even though IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay has been designed for ease of migration from IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7 version 4, it is still worth considering the use of Cognos Professional Services. Cognos Professional Services can provide valuable migration planning services – audit a client's security content, assignment (Access Manager and Upfront), and portal metadata. These are valuable pre-migration exercises. The value that Cognos Professional Services provides to help assess, plan, and also migrate customers with both IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay and IBM Cognos applications, for example, can be compelling and reduce risk to the client. For more information and details, see http://support.cognos.com/en/consulting/services/pdf/cognos_migration.pdf.

If I am a customer who has both IBM Cognos IWR and IBM Cognos PowerPlay and want to move to IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay, what services are available from Cognos Professional Services?

We highly recommend that a client approach any migration in a pragmatic way. In keeping with this approach, Cognos Professional Services offers various forms of Migration Assessments and Migration Implementation Services to reduce risk in any planned migration. You can learn more about the Cognos migration methodology and offerings at http://support.cognos.com/en/consulting/services/pdf/cognos_migration.pdf

What training is recommended for IBM Cognos 8 BI PowerPlay administrators, modelers, and professional report authors? Training for both new users and for those who have used IBM Cognos PowerPlay Series 7?

Cognos Education currently offers a instructor-led course for administrators, modelers, and professional report authors. The What's New? course covers the numerous changes on the administration for the Cognos 8 platform, the Administration Console, cube management, drill-through, load balancing, security and data sources, and the new migration assistant.

Additional courses are under development for OLAP modelers who build PowerCubes for use in IBM Cognos 8 BI, for business authors who analyze data and author reports, and for IBM Cognos PowerPlay administrators.