

Supporting more user communities with IBM Cognos 8 BI

What's new in IBM Cognos 8 BI version 8.3

For business and financial analysts, comparisons and crosstabs are the order of the day. From sales figures to marketing spend, and headcount to customer churn, these users spend their days juggling rows, columns, and data in search of anomalies to address and opportunities to seize.

But to be successful, the reporting software they use must demonstrate several key attributes.

Speed is key. From building initial crosstabs to adding data, formatting, and calculations, the ability to see these changes reflected as they go is critical to their ability to make accurate assessments of organizational performance and the resulting decisions that drive their organizations forward.

Equally important is the ability to see more data in less time. These users demand simple-to-use applications that give them the details, the context, and the core information in as few clicks as possible.

Rows and columns, speed and simplicity. It's for these reasons that business and financial analysts will welcome version 8.3 of IBM Cognos 8 Business Intelligence. IBM Cognos 8 BI is the only software delivering the complete range of BI capabilities: reporting, analysis, scorecarding, and dashboards on a single, proven architecture. It's part of the complete and integrated Cognos platform for performance management.

Overview: Supporting more user communities features

Improved through the input of thousands of successful customers, IBM Cognos 8 BI version 8.3 delivers more focused and relevant information to business and financial analysts more quickly and efficiently than ever before.

New features of special interest to an expanded user community for business intelligence include:

- Express authoring
- Improved IBM Cognos Transformer capabilities
- Scorecard portlets
- Metric-intelligent diagrams
- Self-service strategy management.

Other features and benefits of IBM Cognos 8 BI are captured in these issue papers connected with the newest software release, version 8.3: *More targeted information and Easier modeling and management.*

Specific features of supporting more user communities

Express authoring

A new mode within the reporting capability of IBM Cognos 8 BI version 8.3, Express Authoring lets business and financial analysts build, edit, and share crosstabs quickly and easily. For the first time, users can work with live data throughout the entire process, aided by a streamlined GUI that presents only those objects, calculations, and layouts specific to creating and editing crosstabs. Simply drag data sets into your rows and columns and watch the data appear automatically. Double-click on the parent data in any row and see the "children" appear automatically as well – no need to bring in the data sets one by one. In place of complicated SQL strings are icons and wizards that also save time. Add a calculation or conditional format, or change the layout and fonts and see the changes reflected instantly. For example: an "Eyedropper" icon lets you apply

	2004	2005	% Growth (2004, 2005)
Total Assets	7,221,682,724.03	8,689,543,061.96	20%
Accounts Receivable Total	1,525,189,463.04	583,694,843.65	43%
Asset Cost and Clearing Total	147,172,736.00	239,947,536.50	40%
Cash and Short Term Equivalents	5,545,803,615.51	8,193,912,482.79	48%
Inventory	90,260,010.20	142,496,794.27	63%
Other Assets Total	-49,521,136.76	-71,586,067.07	44%
Other Current Assets Total	1,956,741.42	4,762,436.42	154%
Resource Usage Variance	-101,227.50	-490,494.00	50%
Total Accumulated Deprec., & Amortization	-31,039,474.89	-48,770,104.81	57%
Unearned Revenue from Commitments	-45,325,741.88	-20,248,736.62	96%
Total Assets	0.00	0.00	0%
Total Liabilities	-3,884,283,470.85	-4,724,113,580.79	24%
Accrued Payroll and Taxes	-350,503,462.85	-460,155,916.63	23%
Current Income Taxes Payable	0.00	0.00	0%
Current Liabilities	-5,406,747,267.04	-4,632,082,485.36	18%
Long Term Liabilities	-25,436,714.03	-201,351,091.19	58%
Other Current Liabilities	-27,943,756.43	-30,942,277.41	9%
Total Owners Equity	3,407,372,253.06	4,161,818,481.17	22%

Working with live data to accelerate report production

Pre-defined financial calculations

Financial like formatting

Optimized toolbox for crosstab functionality

system with dozens of rows and columns of relational data (and the resulting possible data combinations they produce) users can turn to IBM Cognos Transformer to quickly build a data cube that can offer sub-second response times to their queries.

To build the cube, IBM Cognos Transformer captures the data in use and brings it directly into a wizard that guides the user through the build process. With a few mouse clicks users can create hierarchies, define relationships,

a style to multiple headings, while the “Conditional Style” wizard lets you indicate good, bad, and fair performance with a few clicks of your mouse.

These features also enable users to build statement-style reports to compare financial results across time periods. Select the dimensions and measures you need, drop them into the crosstab, and add the calculations (for example, percentage growth) as needed. Then choose from the “underline”, “indent,” and other formatting commands to finalize the report.

Improved IBM Cognos Transformer capabilities

A popular feature among long-time Cognos users, IBM Cognos Transformer is now available on the IBM Cognos 8 BI version 8.3 platform. IBM Cognos Transformer will appeal to business and financial analysts because it lets them build and publish data cubes on the fly. Rather than burden the

and publish the cube as a data source and package within the Cognos Connection portal. From there, it's available as a new data source for reports, queries, and analysis.

Scorecard portlets

Scorecard Portlets address the business and financial analysts' need to see more information more quickly. For the first time, users can now access scorecards and history charts from within the Cognos Connection portal. This significantly reduces the number of clicks needed to analyze and understand business performance, thereby making it easier to communicate with others what's happening within their organization, and promote the value of scorecards and other BI capabilities within your organization. In addition to metric watch lists, strategic metric lists, and history charts, users will now be able to see lists of scorecard metrics, metric types, and accountabilities.

Embed scorecards into Cognos Connection



Global filtering

Embed history charts into Cognos Connection

Metric-intelligent diagrams

Metric-intelligent diagrams also let business and financial analysts see more information more quickly, by replacing clicks with innovative mouse-overs. By simply hovering their mouse over the metric in question, users instantly receive important additional information, such as impact analyses, metric history, ownership, thresholds, and more. In this way, IBM Cognos 8 BI version 8.3 brings more information to the user's attention more quickly, speeding up the decision-making process and driving improved performance.

Self-service strategy maps

A common barrier to BI adoption is the business analyst's reliance on IT for matters both big and small. With IT infrastructures growing increasingly complex, IT is pressed to allocate resources to small, albeit important, user requests for improvements to existing deployments.

For business and financial analysts who rely on scorecards to monitor their performance against targets, IBM Cognos 8 BI version 8.3 offers Self-service strategy maps. This feature lets users add new strategic objectives and supporting metrics to their scorecard and strategy maps without IT assistance, thereby simultaneously eliminating delays and increasing the value of the scorecard for decision-making and performance.

Summary

IBM Cognos 8 BI version addresses the growing need for "more". Through the new Express authoring mode and an improved Transformer, users can work with data more quickly and more efficiently. Through innovative new features such as Scorecard portlets, Metric-intelligent diagrams, and Self-service strategy maps, users can access more information, more easily. The result? A more effective BI deployment that reaches more users and enables better decisions.

About Cognos, an IBM Company

Cognos, an IBM Company, is the world leader in business intelligence and performance management solutions. It provides world-class enterprise planning and BI software and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance. Cognos was acquired by IBM in February 2008. For more information, visit www.cognos.com.



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