



# **Reporting for Oracle E-Business Suite: An IBM Cognos BI and Noetix Solution**

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## Abstract

Companies today have huge amounts of operational data that needs to be optimized and processed in an efficient manner. This data is key to helping executives and managers make timely decisions. The data usually resides in enterprise applications that have been customized to meet the needs of their user base. Adding on a business intelligence (BI) solution can involve extensive modifications to match up with these customizations. Noetix offers a solution that simplifies this process, saving time and money while providing the data that decision makers need.

## Overview

Enterprise applications, such as Oracle E-Business Suite, are designed and optimized to process huge amounts of operational data efficiently. In terms of reporting, this optimization brings about an inherent complexity that prevents quick, cost-effective access to operational data.

This application complexity is why traditional business intelligence solutions require extensive effort in manually mapping the data structures before any real reporting can begin. To the surprise of many, the financial investment required to extend enterprise application functionality to include “user friendly” reporting rivals the costs of deploying the enterprise application itself.

## Business Problems

Since the deployment of the first “out-of-the-box” enterprise application, access to operational data has been a challenge for many IT departments. To enable rapid, user-friendly access, many organizations have invested millions of dollars and thousands of hours of effort to map the application’s complexity to improve data access. This effort is seemingly wasted when the application is upgraded and the data structures change, breaking the data-to-report linkage.

As executives continue to demand real-time access to operational data to assist in their daily decision making, IT departments and report administrators grow increasingly frustrated by the seemingly never-ending report development effort.

Oracle E-Business Suite applications are designed for transactional efficiency. Their databases contain complex data structures that make little sense to the non-technical professional. To bridge the information gap, a number of “out-of-the-box” reporting solutions, including Oracle’s own BI solution, provide metadata templates that jump-start the mapping effort. But they still require vast amounts of manual effort to implement the solution.

Many BI vendors have tried to deliver true plug-and-play reporting solutions. But there is a problem when the solution meets the customizations made to the enterprise application. An organization’s custom business rules, user roles, and setups add to the complexity – and the information gap grows wider.

Oracle’s customers have tremendous flexibility to change the configuration of their system, through application-specific setups such as key and descriptive flexfields, and list of values. The trade-off for this flexibility is that the underlying database tables become immensely complex and result in truly one-of-a-kind implementations.

Bridging this complexity is a significant challenge for many organizations. These unique application configurations inhibit the deployment of traditional BI solutions that require extensive customization and ongoing maintenance.

## Business Drivers

Companies need to bridge the information gap between their Oracle E-Business Suite applications and non-technical professionals who need the data in those applications to make day-to-day decisions in a real-time manner. Since companies often customize these applications, they are unable to use out-of-the-box BI solutions. They need a tool to tie their Oracle E-Business Suite application data with their BI solution – one that won't require extensive customization.

## The Solution

Many Oracle customers use IBM® Cognos® 8 Business Intelligence (BI) to access their Oracle E-Business Suite application data. IBM Cognos BI helps companies drive higher performance from their Oracle platform by making information easier to access for reporting and business analysis.

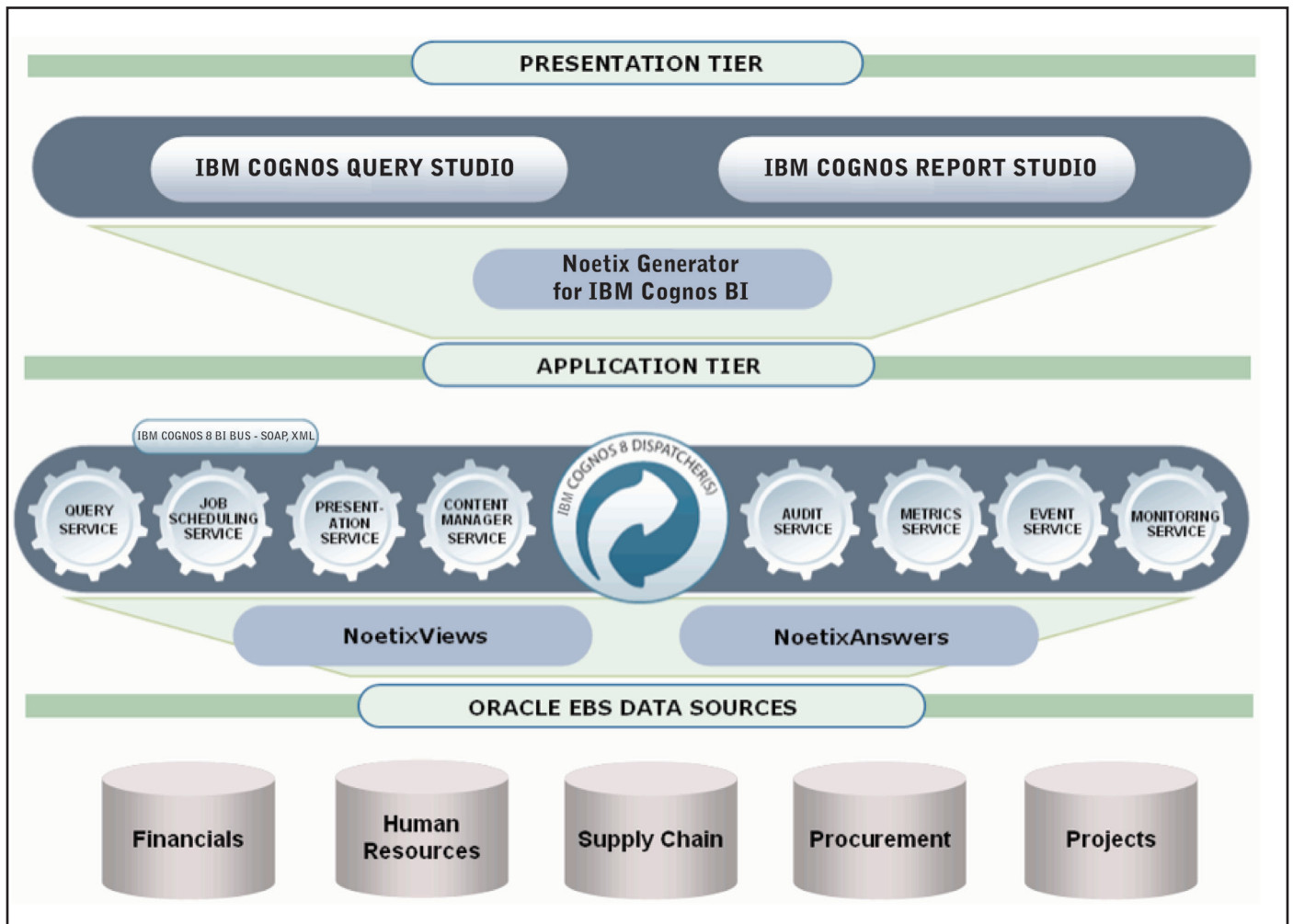
Noetix provides the tools and technology that tightly links the IBM Cognos BI solution with the operational information found within the Oracle E-Business Suite. Noetix rapidly deciphers Oracle's application complexity and generates a broad collection of business views and pre-built reports. This, in turn, delivers immediate insight into the organization's real-time operational performance.

Using the Noetix solution, it's not uncommon for Oracle customers to answer their toughest business questions in only a matter of minutes, greatly increasing the organization's level of insight into their business. The Noetix solution accelerates the deployment of BI initiatives by up to 90 percent, delivering an exceptionally high return on investment (ROI).

### The IBM Cognos 8 BI and Noetix Solution

IBM® Cognos® 8 BI is the only BI product to deliver the complete range of BI capabilities: reporting, analysis, scorecarding, dashboards, business event management, as well as data integration, on a single, proven architecture.

Our unique BI solution integrates seamlessly with Oracle databases, gateways, and applications. This helps organizations make better decisions by improving visibility of all their data, helping them discover hidden relationships, spot key trends, and easily disseminate reports.



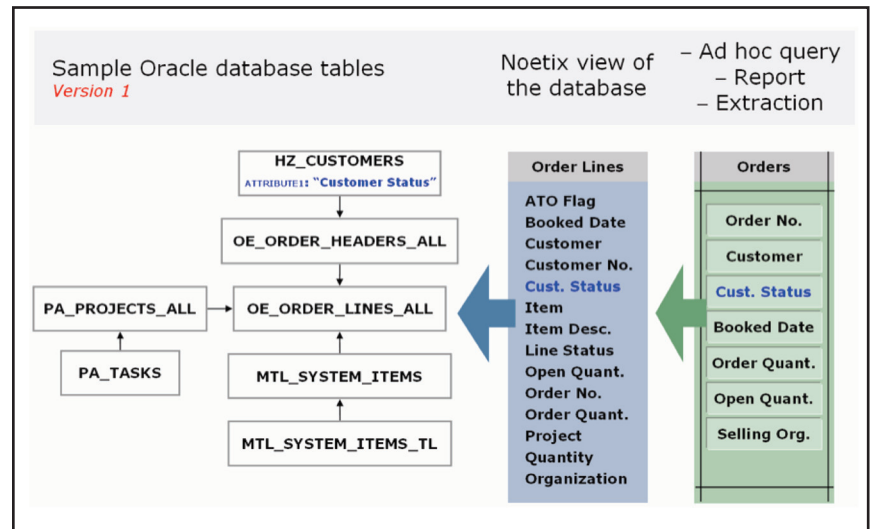
Noetix provides the tools and technology that links the IBM Cognos BI solution with the operational information within the Oracle E-Business Suite.

With its flagship product, NoetixViews, Noetix bridges the gap between the technical complexities of the Oracle database and the need to access real-time information by generating business views tailored to the customer's unique Oracle E-Business Suite configuration.

With Noetix Generator, administrators can bypass the manual effort of setting up NoetixViews in an IBM Cognos BI environment, thus saving them time and accelerating the deployment of Oracle E-Business Suite application data to users of IBM Cognos software.

**NoetixViews for Oracle E-Business Suite**

A Noetix view is a business view of Oracle E-Business Suite application data that can be accessed by most reporting tools and BI applications. Views do not contain data that can be manipulated. Instead, they reflect information derived from a number of Oracle's base tables. When developing queries or reports, report writers construct their reports against the views, which in turn map the data request automatically to the correct tables and rows in the underlying Oracle database.



NoetixViews provide a simplified view of the underlying database

## Features

**Simplifies access to data.** Noetix deciphers the maze of Oracle tables for you, joins them properly, and performs the necessary data transformations while simultaneously introducing business terminology.

**Automatically picks up customer-specific application setups.** At the time of installation, Noetix analyses the application database, deciphers its unique configurations, such as key and descriptive flexfields, and then automatically creates a customized set of NoetixViews.

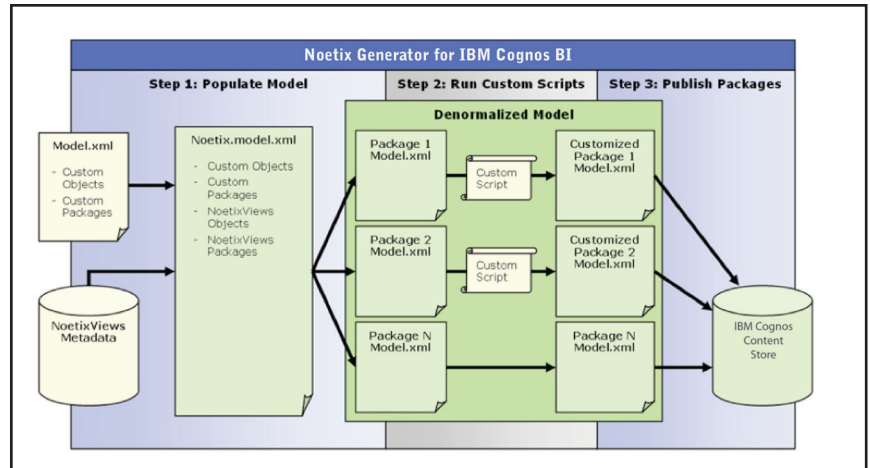
**Documentation provides standardized data definitions and empowers end users.** NoetixViews constructs and publishes a Help File, which documents and catalogs the customer's unique set of views in their business terminology, making it quick and easy to create ad hoc reports.

**Protects custom reports and queries from application upgrades.** Reports developed directly against the database tables risk expensive rework when the underlying applications are upgraded. Noetix protects reports from these database changes by automatically remapping the views to the new database structures.

## Noetix Generator for IBM Cognos BI

Noetix Generator for IBM Cognos BI further simplifies and accelerates rolling out end user reporting to IBM Cognos BI users.

Noetix Generator automatically populates an IBM Cognos Framework Manager model with NoetixViews for Oracle E-Business Suite. It then publishes this model as NoetixViews packages into the IBM Cognos Content Store. As a result, report authors and query users can immediately begin using IBM Cognos 8 BI to develop their reports and queries against configuration-specific views of their Oracle E-Business Suite application data.



The three basic steps in the generation process

### Administrator Features

The key benefit for IBM Cognos 8 BI administrators is automation. With a few clicks, the generator automates many of the administrator’s manual tasks of populating NoetixViews in the IBM Cognos BI environment. Specifically:

- Within minutes, administrators can automatically populate a model in IBM Cognos Framework Manager with the latest NoetixViews content. An IBM Cognos query subject (and its query items) is created for each Noetix view (and its columns).
- NoetixAnswers is a collection of pre-built reports – based on NoetixViews – that answer some of the most common business questions. NoetixAnswers provides hundreds of customizable reports “out-of-the-box” for users to begin using immediately in IBM Cognos 8 BI.



- Administrators can automatically publish Noetix-generated packages into the IBM Cognos Content Store. Alternatively, administrators can use IBM Cognos Framework Manager to manually publish these packages.
- By grouping IBM Cognos query subjects by NoetixViews roles, security setup is greatly simplified. Administrators can easily grant these roles to IBM Cognos BI users, giving them access to only the views they are authorized to use.
- As with NoetixViews, administrators can schedule an unattended regeneration of NoetixViews into their IBM Cognos software environment when it is convenient for the business. Regenerations for both NoetixViews and Noetix Generator can be scheduled to execute sequentially, making it easier for administrators to keep their IBM Cognos environments synchronized with the latest NoetixViews content.

## User Features

Because Noetix Generator automates the process of populating NoetixViews into the IBM Cognos BI environment, users gain much quicker access to their Oracle E-Business application data.

Other features:

- The Noetix Generator populates IBM Cognos 8 BI with descriptive content, normally found within the NoetixViews Help File. This provides IBM Cognos BI users with the familiar language from the Oracle E-Business Suite applications they know and understand.
- Based on the familiar organization found within the NoetixViews Help File, users can easily navigate IBM Cognos namespaces, folders, and shortcuts.
- The Noetix Generator automatically defines the joins between related Noetix views, providing users with greater breadth and depth of information retrieval.
- IBM Cognos report authors can add efficient filters to their reports by using specialized Noetix-generated List of Values (LOV) views. These views can be used to enhance performance when filtering data in a report.

## How Noetix Manages Security

A major benefit in using Noetix as a data source for IBM Cognos BI is that it provides support for Oracle Application user authentication.

With Noetix, users log in to a single account to access everything they are authorized to see. IBM Cognos BI administrators do not have to set up and maintain multiple accounts, saving more time and expense.

Noetix inherently supports NoetixViews roles and the security that is built into each Noetix view. The solution can be extended to allow Oracle users to select a specific responsibility when logging in with their Oracle Applications credentials.

## Conclusion

With IBM Cognos 8 BI, Noetix puts the power of Oracle E-Business Suite to work generating the reports that your executives and managers need for timely decision making. You get simpler access to the data in your maze of Oracle tables, customized NoetixViews based on the application database, a Help File constructed by NoetixViews to fit your unique set of views and business terminology, and reports that are protected by automatic remapping of these views to the new database structures.

Save time and money by avoiding costly customization, setup, and user training while getting the true power of your data into the decision-makers' hands when it is needed.

## Key Definitions

Business Intelligence – A class of applications that gather, analyze, and store information about your business, including performance, procedures, and project status/problems.

Dashboard – A user interface displaying information in an interactive and easy-to-read format for quick reference and analysis.

Metadata – An individual item of data or a collection of data (multiple content items and/or hierarchical levels).

Scorecard – A display of results against strategic goals to track performance and achievement and expedite business decisions.



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## About IBM Cognos BI and Performance Management

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For further information or to reach a representative: [www.ibm.com/cognos](http://www.ibm.com/cognos)

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