

THE BATTLE OF BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE: TRADITIONAL BI VS DATA DISCOVERY

WITH THE GROWTH OF DATA DISCOVERY SOFTWARE IN RECENT YEARS, GARTNER IS NOW RECOMMENDING ORGANIZATIONS ADOPT A "BI-MODAL" APPROACH THAT INCORPORATES BOTH BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE AND DATA DISCOVERY.

Although Business Intelligence and Data Discovery share many similarities, it is important to understand the differences between the two. In order for organizations to accurately assess which is the right fit for them, they need to map out their goals and objectives based on what each offers.

Definitions

Traditional Business Intelligence

Business Intelligence is the traditional approach to helping people make the right decision based on the right data, at the right time. Traditionally, this has involved the development of a data warehouse and cubes that are used for both structured reporting and ad-hoc analysis. Usually the data sources are internal (i.e., ERP, CRM or other operational systems).

Data Discovery

Data Discovery is the new kid on the block. It helps people discover hidden patterns and trends through the meshing of different data sources. Typically, a data warehouse is not required, cubes are not leveraged, and the structure used to store and model data from disparate sources is proprietary. Most often both internal and external data is being meshed together.

Similarities

- Both technologies promise to make data usable for decision-making.
- The data is also visualized in very similar ways.

Differences

- Business Intelligence is ideal for modelling and answering questions you are asking about things that you know. For instance, "How much beer did I sell by location?"
- Data Discovery is ideal for uncovering answers to questions that you are not currently asking and about things you don't know. For instance, "Does the weather or demographics of an area influence beer sales?"
- The essential difference between them can be characterized by considering who typically does the development in each.



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Summary

In traditional Business Intelligence, IT professionals or developers are required to create and maintain the organization-wide system that has a single version of the truth.

With Data Discovery, anyone who understands the relationships between the data being meshed together can do the development. As one may expect, incorporating external data and meshing it with internal data is not a perfect science, but it can reveal pearls that would otherwise be unknown. Also, different people may come up with different versions of the truth.

The table below highlights some of the key differences between the two approaches.

The Traditional BI vs Data Discovery debate summarized

	Traditional BI	Data Discovery (Mash Up)
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data governance (i.e. security) Single version of the truth Easier for executives, managers, and business users Enterprise BI capabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapid development time (i.e. days) Sets do-it-yourself analysts free
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development time (i.e. months) Places constraints on do-it-yourself analysts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data governance (i.e. security) Multiple versions of the truth Too difficult for executives, managers, and business users Enterprise BI capabilities

Implications

Did you notice that the pros of the one are the cons of the other and vice versa? That is why many organizations will ultimately make use of both Business Intelligence and Data Discovery tools.

In fact, there is a trend towards Enterprise Business Intelligence solutions incorporating both approaches. This is good news for any organization looking to leverage technology to strengthen its competitive advantage.

Recommendations

- Embrace 100% of your organizational data (both internal and external) for decision-making.
- Start with an internal assessment of current needs and future vision.
- Reach out to BDO IT Solutions to help guide you through a bi-modal approach to your needs.
- Finally, don't believe the hype! There are real differences between these technologies and the value they deliver.

Why BDO for your Business Analytics?

BDO IT Solutions' Business Analytics team specializes in the implementation and support of Business Intelligence and Corporate Performance Management solutions. Our team works with business leaders to provide a better understanding of how technology can help drive financial and operational effectiveness. Our collaborative approach simplifies the discovery process, gives you information specific to your business, and shows you the impact technology adoption can bring to the ongoing and future success of your business.

About BDO IT Solutions

BDO IT Solutions helps organizations align technology to their overall business strategies using Microsoft technology. Harnessing the power of on-premise, hybrid, and cloud solutions, BDO IT Solutions enables our clients to streamline their business processes and improve overall operational efficiency. This group of experienced professionals provides consulting, implementation, training, and support for a variety of solutions, including Microsoft Dynamics AX, GP, NAV, CRM, Office 365, SharePoint, and Power BI as well as Business Intelligence and Corporate Performance Management. www.bdosolutions.ca

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