Chapter 12 Enhancing Decision Making

Case 2: IBM and Cognos: Business Intelligence and Analytics for Improved Decision Making

Tags: business decision making; business intelligence software; decision support systems; management reporting systems; executive dashboards; mobile delivery platforms.

Summary

In this video from the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), Dan Fulwiler and Steve Segalewitz from IBM, discuss how understanding your online data more clearly can improve decision-making. Video demonstration of IBM/Cognos BI software applications.

In the accelerating media industry, discovering relevant business insights within the chaos of available information can lead to substantial competitive advantage. IBM Business Intelligence and Analytics is designed to integrate all data providers and in-house sources to reveal timely and actionable business insights. The software collects, connects and leverages information from consumers to suppliers. L= 5:06

URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NI59ZgyQqBc

Case

IBM has been known for most of its recent history as the world's largest computer company. With over 388,000 employees worldwide, IBM is the largest and most profitable information technology employer in the world. It is still selling computers today, and is still one of the biggest computer companies in the world, and it has also been known to produce very efficient computers as well. IBM holds more patents than any other U.S. based technology company and has eight research laboratories worldwide.

Known for its highly talented workforce, the company has scientists, engineers, consultants, and sales professionals in over 170 countries. IBM employees have earned three Nobel Prizes, four Turing Awards, five National Medals of Technology, and five National Medals of Science. As a chip maker, IBM has been among the Worldwide Top 20 Semiconductor Sales Leaders in past years, and in 2007 IBM ranked second in the list of largest software companies in the world.

In addition to all of this, IBM also offers business intelligence and analytics tools through its Cognos division. Cognos (formerly Cognos Incorporated) is an Ottawa, Ontario based company which makes business intelligence (BI) and performance management software. Founded in 1969, Cognos employed almost 3,500 people and served more than 23,000 customers in over 135 countries. Cognos was originally known as Quasar and adopted its current name in 1982. On January 31, 2008, Cognos was officially acquired by IBM.

This video showcases one of Cognos' flagship products, Cognos 8 BI, as well as other IBM Web site analytics tools. In the first segment, IBM describes the ability of its software to track consumers on their Web site and get detailed information about what they view, how long they view it for, and where they came from. Thanks to their partnership with Akamai, they can do the same for the video featured on their site.

The second segment describes Cognos 8 BI and its ability access all data from any and all sources across the enterprise. Cognos 8 BI is useful to users analysts, executives, and people just needing a report. It is accessible via desktop and laptop computers, BlackBerries, and many other mobile devices. The information it provides is viewable in a number of ways (dashboard, metrics, scorecards, reports) based on the needs of the user.

The goal of Cognos 8 BI is to allow many different kinds of users, working on a variety of systems, to take information, analyze it, and understand it better in order to make better decisions.

Case Study Questions

1. How does improving decision making add value for a business?

2. Explain why it might be useful to have detailed Web site metrics like those IBM provides.

3. Use the Web to find out some of the specific capabilities of Cognos 8 BI.

4. Describe the differences between the ways executives and lower-level employees would use business intelligence software.

5. How is gathering data about consumers different from gathering internal data from within a company's own systems?