

6 Essential Elements Every Reporting Solution Should Include

Not all reporting tools are created equal. Don't assume that every one comes with the same options. What should you look for in a good business reporting tool? First and foremost, any good reporting solution should generate web-based reports. Why? Non-web based reports are only accessible on the computer where they're stored. Web-based reports are accessible via any web-enabled device, such as PCs, tablets, or smartphones. Beyond that, here's a list of 6 essential capabilities you should look for in a good reporting tool:

Tip: Click the images or blue text to view live demo applications



Ad-hoc Reporting: Ad-hoc reporting is essential because it lets end users create and distribute reports on the fly. The user selects the data elements he/she wishes to see in the report, and then can either export the report into a format of their choosing or email it directly from the web browser. Ad-hoc reporting is important because it brings simple reporting capabilities to the users, taking the reporting burden off of the IT department.



Web Pivot Table Report: Pivot tables are powerful interactive reports that let users view data from multiple perspectives. It lets users quickly rearrange fields and see their data from any angle they desire. Pivot tables are great for analyzing data, making comparisons, and discovering trends.



Interactive Reporting: Interactive reports display as much or as little data as the user desires, and lets users analyze the data however they wish. It starts out with a high level view of business data and lets users filter, sort, and drill down to the most minute details. Interactive reports are incredibly useful tools as they let users view their data in any way they wish.



Business Dashboard: A business dashboard displays multiple high-level graphs and reports in one easy-to-use interface. It lets executives see information critical to their everyday decision-making and can alert a company to problems before they get out of hand.



Ranking Report: A ranking report creates variable rankings, across multiple dimensions, while specifying various selection criteria at run-time. What does that mean? Well, suppose you wanted to see your top 10 products over the last year. Or, suppose you wanted to see which regions performed the worst over the last 5 years. The ranking report is a critical component to a good reporting solution because it lets users quickly compile reports showing the best and worst of any aspect of their business.



Drill-down Report: Drill-down reports give users a high-level overview of their data and lets them drill down into more information as needed. Drill-down reports also provide interactive charts and graphs, which let users drill down to more information when they click on graph values.