

Editor's Letter

Master Data Management and Information Governance Initiatives: What you need to know

Organisations of all sizes and in all industries are recognising the importance of high-quality data and the critical role of data quality in information governance and stewardship driven by broader enterprise information management initiatives. As a result, their interest in the role of tools and technology for data quality improvement continues to grow. Data quality functionality is also being recognised as a fundamental component of offerings in many related software markets, such as data integration tools, master data management (MDM) solutions and business intelligence (BI) platforms.

The demand for data quality tools continues to see significant growth, and this is a clear indication of the convergence of data profiling, data-cleansing operations and domain-specific management. A macro trend of convergence of the data quality tools market and the related market for data integration tools continues, as organisations **recognise that data integration activities must provide more than simply data delivery – they must ensure the quality of the data being delivered enhances the value of data integration investments.** Integration of these capabilities into a single architecture and product – specifically, integration at the metadata level, for example, a single unified metadata repository or the ability to apply findings from one toolset to create inference outcomes in another.



A significant trend in this market is the continued expansion of the tools' capabilities beyond the basic data quality operations of parsing, standardisation and matching of structured data assets in a narrow set of data domains (for example, customer data only). Vendors are delivering technology with a focus on data quality analysis, pervasive deployment of data quality controls, ongoing data quality monitoring and flexibility to address a range of data subject areas, with advanced techniques.

Data quality assessment and monitoring technology is coming to the fore. Innovation in the data quality tools market relates to technology to help organisations measure and monitor levels of data quality, focusing on domain-agnostic data quality services, based on a centrally managed set of business rules.

Business Intelligence Training – Unlocking the Value of Your Solution

There are crucial differences between the definition of a Business Intelligence Application, and that of a Business Intelligence Solution. Whilst the former concerns the provision of a software mechanism capable of delivering answers to key business questions, the latter extends this definition to consider the requirements for user skills, user training, cultural adoption, “fitness-of-purpose”, and the tailoring of the mechanism to not merely answer critical business questions, but also ensure these answers permeate to all levels of the organisation. The validity test for a Business Intelligence Application is whether it can deliver the right answer to a business question, the validity test for a Business Intelligence Solution is whether it supports the business in making and implementing the right business decision at exactly the right time. As a result ensuring cultural change and user adoption forms one of the base pillars of any **visualmetrics** solution implementation.

In most cases Business Intelligence Solutions have a large user base whose skills and knowledge with these new tools, post-implementation and full user training, steadily decay. There comes a point when a lack of applicable skills becomes an impediment to driving optimal return from staff and software.



Training a large user base internally with the prerequisite skills which compliment their specific user roles is usually expensive and impractical; as such internal training is often either abandoned, or else it results in a “one-size-fits-all” approach. Recognising these challenges **visualmetrics** has developed a series of packaged training courses which can be customised by both user class requirements as well as by product. These courses are also tailored to a client’s specific business requirements and individual environment, ensuring each user receives the training they need.

Business Intelligence Training Course Special Offer

Introducing BI

Navigating,
personalising and
viewing/managing
reports
Creating, refreshing,
modifying and
distributing reports



½ day

Advanced Analysis

Advanced report
creation – includes
merging dimensions
from multiple queries
and using formulas to
manipulate data



1 day

Extended Editing

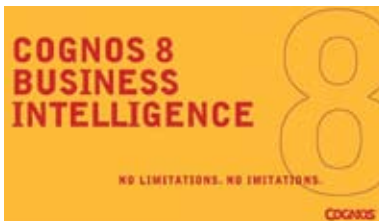
Including custom
graphics and add-ins
i.e. Maps and GPRS



½ day

2 day course for up to 6 people Only £3,000* - Call (0)870 7606467

*Subject to **visualmetrics** terms and conditions, contact a representative for more information



IBM Cognos 8.4 – Road Test

2nd October 2008 saw the release of IBM Cognos 8.4, available from Q4 2008.

Duly we've been 'kicking the tyres' to find out what this latest instalment in the immensely successful IBM Cognos 8 BI platform would mean for customers; we found a few interesting surprises.

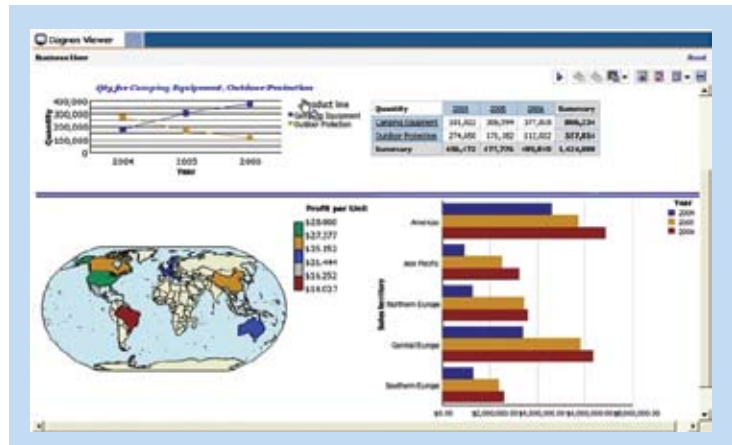
Updated Features & Functions

- **Search-driven report generation** - Allowing users to run ad-hoc queries via a simple interface.
- **Location reports** - Delivers reports to mobile devices based on their geographic location.
- **Report annotations** - Add observations and comments to reports.
- **Expanded chart options** - Sparkline, Merimekko, Stepline, Sparkbar, and Spark Win/Loss.
- **Dimension management** - Users are now able to apply consistent viewpoints, dimensions, and hierarchies to financial and operational data.
- **Updated user planning interface** - New features including: Hierarchy support, sort & hide, freeze panes, end-user tab management, zoom, and word wrap.
- **Expanded data access** - Integration of data from TM1 and IBM Cognos Now!
- **Data lineage** - See the history, calculations, and definitions applied to data as it moves through your system.
- **Business Glossary** - See definitions of key report terms with a single mouse click.

NEW PRODUCTS FOR IBM COGNOS 8.4:

IBM Cognos 8 Go! Dashboard

Stood side-by-side with competitive products Cognos 8 BI had perhaps lacked a certain visual panache, short on the 'first date' wow-factor that gets the technically incompetent excited. Recognising that some people are scared by anything that resembles a spreadsheet, and that everyone likes fancy dials, graphs, maps and gauges, Cognos have introduced the Go! Dashboard flash interface allowing 'drag and drop' dashboard creation with no IT skills requirement. Highly visual, information rich, pre-configured elements allow users to create dashboards in under a minute, and easily set alert thresholds which keep them up to date whilst on the move. It's sleek, slick and simple.



PowerPlay

Yes...it's back! Possibly the most notable absence from the Cognos 8 BI platform, PowerPlay's exclusion was 'mourned' by patrons with many resisting, or simply refusing, to upgrade. Now it's been re-released and integrated into the Cognos 8 BI product stack as of version 4, allowing customers to 'slice and dice' virtually any multidimensional data source on-line or off-line. A tasteful facelift and a few new inclusions make this the best version of PowerPlay yet:

Updated Features & Functions

- Access to Professional report authoring mode in Report Studio, richer drill-through capabilities, and scheduling and event management as part of the Cognos 8 BI platform.
- Access services, cubes and report settings from within the zero-footprint admin console.
- Ability to leverage the security from a Cognos 8 BI namespace if used in conjunction with cubes created in Transformer.

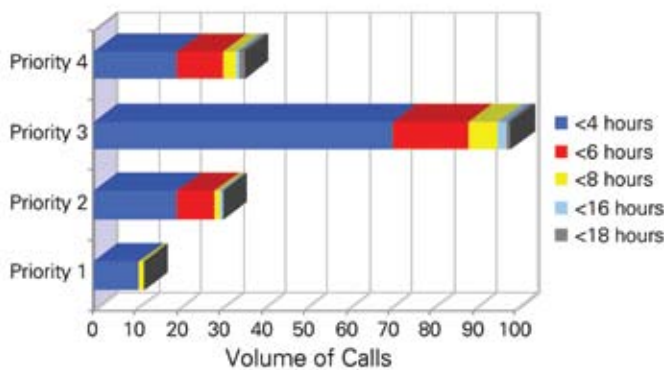
A migration footpath from PowerPlay Series 7 is also currently available, contact support@visualmetrics.co.uk for more information.

visualassurance – Business Continuity & Future Proofing Investment

The **visualassurance** tailored support service offers customers both fast and efficient reactive solutions to technical issues encountered, alongside a host of proactive services which ensure our clients maximize the return they make from their investments. Services include; timely communication and implementation of component product upgrades and bug-fixes, regular technical updates and the continuing optimisation of the solution through changing business conditions.

The performance of **visualmetrics** in call handling and problem resolution is the corner stone to the support services which we offer to our clients. We continually track these measures to ensure we are fulfilling and exceeding the contracted SLAs and expectations of our clients.

Support Call Time to Resolution by Priority



With exponentially evolving technology, and ever changing means of communication, the methods by which we deliver support to our customers are constantly growing. Alongside Telephone, E-mail, Post, Remote Desktop, Web Server, Tele-Conference and Webex we are also re-developing our instant messenger capabilities, and re-building our on-line portal, enabling customers to reach our support team as fast as possible, and using whatever means best fits their requirements.

For more information on the **visualassurance** support service please visit: www.visualmetrics.co.uk/visualassurance
Or call us on 0870 760 6467

Our Business Partners

To achieve the business objectives of being a premier organisation in the delivery of Analytical Applications, which derive business value for its clients, **visualmetrics** recognises the need to have a range of business partners who fall into three distinct categories:

PRODUCT PARTNERS who develop industry leading BI tools & BI suites. These are core components of the applications which **visualmetrics** already has, or will develop for custom specific reasons.



APPLICATION PARTNERS who have market leading operational applications, in chosen business sectors & operational areas. Their clients have requirements for information analysis, which is satisfied by the applications and consulting services of **visualmetrics**.



SERVICE PARTNERS who are recognised industry experts in management consulting, and technical consulting areas.



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Metrics House, Hilliards Court, Chester Business Park,
Chester, CH4 9QP
T: +44 (0) 870 7606467 F: +44 (0) 870 7606468
www.visualmetrics.co.uk sales@visualmetrics.co.uk

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