



CHOOSING THE REPORTING / BI SOLUTION THAT IS BEST FOR YOU

SIMPLE, ACCESSIBLE & EASY TO IMPLEMENT

Have you seen the Orbitz commercial that is running on TV right now – the one where 2 contestants compete to book a hotel room with certain specifications? The guy in a suit picks up the phone book to look up a number, and the distracted father with 3 kids hits the button and yells “DONE!” because he used the Orbitz website. It shows how ***work can be easy with the right product.***

There is a large range of Reporting / Business Intelligence (BI) Solutions on the market today. Of course in our opinion **Cizer.Net Reporting & Microsoft Scorecard Manager with Quick Query** are the logical choices. We see Cizer.Net providing for BI, what Orbitz provides for online reservations. However we know the solution you choose depends on what you need BI to do for you!

This document outlines several different types of Reporting & BI Solutions, as well as a set of self-discovery questions to ask. In order to make an effective Business Intelligence Roadmap for your company, you need to **determine your BI starting point and your BI goals.**

BI BOOT CAMP TO EVALUATE YOUR BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE NEEDS

An excellent way to begin this process is with our BI Boot Camp – you can sign up free online. The Cizer boot camp will walk you thru a **BI Self-Evaluation** designed to help you identify your needs and pick the best tools for your specific job.

- o What solution are you using today?
- o Which parts work for your [customers / employees / management] and which ones don't?
- o Which pieces do you want to keep and which ones do you want to replace?

Some more detailed questions you can also ask::

- o What does my data look like?
- o Do I know what I want to be able to do with my information (***measure performance, analyze data, run reports***)?
- o What reports do I need to build?
- o What elements are most important to my reporting success (***OLAP cubes, Pivot-charts, Pivot-tables, key performance indicators, report distribution, alerts, ad-hoc reporting, canned reports***)?
- o Do you have multiple data sources you're trying to synchronize across geographically disbursed offices?
- o Do you need to extract data for reporting from a mega-tool or application that's being used already?
- o What does each level of my company need from this data?
- o How can I give the right data to the right people with a minimum of overhead?
- o What parts of reporting and analysis do I want my IT department to support?
- o Should I give users access to ***self-service reporting***?

GET THE BEST TOOL FOR YOUR NEEDS

Go ahead and think outside the box when you are creating your wish-list. There are so many options on the market today that virtually everyone can find a solution for their specific needs.

Old school reporting was very elitist – because people who could write reports were technically elite. But this created a bottleneck of people waiting for their Business Information. Queues of report requests end up sitting on the desk of the technical “Report Guru”, while business users wait for their data to come back to them for analysis.

So applications were developed that encourage business users to become technical in order to write reports. The main issue with business users creating queries against raw data sources – is the lack of means to validate the data being pulled (... tricky inner/outer joins and SQL logic is the domain of database administrators). Furthermore, the report writing client applications and their data access had to be maintained on the client machine.

Today's tools – like Cizer – extend the report writing tasks to the right people, in the right way. ***Techies control the data and write SQL queries, but Business Analysts can write reports based on those re-usable queries.*** This allows business data to flow to all appropriate levels of your company, and provides a competitive edge for success.

Because of the tiered architecture of modern solutions – ***it's now possible to give your users personalized access to BI & Reporting.*** The power user in HR may need access to lots of tools and data, and the freedom to create reports. But the manager in finance who just wants to click and run reports – can easily change the reports in an ad-hoc manner and quickly get variations from common data elements. Cizer.Net Reporting provides a suite of tools to suit these varied needs.

The grid on the next page provides a general overview of the different types of reporting solutions available on the market today. This will give you the basic idea of categories of tools – and help you understand the options and pick the best solution from the mix.

Categories: Reporting / BI Solutions	How do these kinds of solution work?	What are the benefits of these solutions?	What are the cons?	Where do these kinds of solutions work best?
Large, Complete Package Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o BO o Cognos o Hyperion o etc 	Analysis and reporting functions work together to provide an integrated user interface to provide a single solution to users	Sophisticated analysis can be accomplished against business data with large numbers of pre-built reports, against large data sets	Complicated to set up (requires a programmer), and very costly. Users sometimes do not feel well-served since IT has to set up everything	Works best with large ERP Finance or HR systems such as PeopleSoft or SAP, where users expect reporting to be pre-built for them
Small, Application Specific, "Canned" Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o embedded in an application o static factory delivered reports 	Analysis and reporting functions are integrated within a business application, such as a case management system, to provide pre-packaged reports	Look and feel are usually similar to the overall application, which helps provide access to reporting that can be intuitive to users that are familiar with the application	Typically limited in scope of reporting and analysis features, and users often have to get new functionality delivered by the programmers that are responsible for the application	Works best with a dedicated business-specific application, where reporting only needs to be targeted to specific needs when working within the application itself
Client Server Tools for Advanced User Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Visual Studio o Crystal Reports o etc 	Individual installations of reporting tools are placed on a user's machine, in support of personal data retrieval requirements	Specialized job functions can be served by installing a few copies of the client server tool, without having to support the tools across large user populations	Requires a sophisticated end-user to make use of the toolset, and necessitates individualized maintenance of user machine installations	Works best with advanced analytical users, where specialized functionality, such as high-end statistical analysis, is needed
Web Access, Ad-Hoc, Self Service Reporting against data from multiple sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Cizer.Net Reporting 	Individuals access reporting functionality through their browser, making use of server-based reporting tools to create reports on-the-fly	Requires no installation on end-user machines, and can enable users to accomplish reporting and analysis without waiting for IT to help	The reporting features are less robust in a browser, where everything must be accomplished within an Internet Explorer environment	Works best with large user populations, or geographically dispersed users, who need to use reporting against a variety of data
Web Access Complete Business Dashboard Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Cizer.Net Reporting with MS Business Scorecard Manager o Organization specific portal applications 	Reporting, analysis, and measurement (the 3 pillars of business intelligence) are presented in an integrated dashboard interface, sometimes known as an executive information system or decision support system	Users can see the health of their organization portrayed on the screen, and use automatically connected analysis and reporting tools to examine data areas of interest or explore problems highlighted by the measurement scorecards	Requires a dedicated business intelligence server, with a properly designed fact-dimension arrangement of data pulled in from enterprise data sources	Works best where many users need to run an organization with one trusted source of measurement indicators, supported by analysis tools and reporting – brings a single version of the truth to meetings so areas of concern can be objectively handled