

XWIS

The analytic power and data scalability of WebIntelligence™ with the intuitive, dynamic visualisation of Xcelsius™

DASHBOARDS AS A BUSINESS TOOL

Dashboards are no longer the preserve of senior management, but are increasingly accepted as a valuable business aid for users at all levels within the enterprise.

This change of emphasis demands a change in approach. Traditional management dashboards deliver a fixed set of high level data, typically in the form of key performance indicators and summary reports or charts. If the manager needs more in depth information, then he has to resort to a business intelligence tool, or more likely ask an analyst to investigate, again with a business intelligence tool.

Dashboards used by business users, on the other hand, still need to present high level relevant information in a way that engenders rapid understanding, but must also support the user in the subsequent analysis of that data, and in sharing the results. And they need to do so within the same intuitive environment – not force the user into a different technology.



XWIS – the **Xcelsius WebIntelligence Integration Suite** - meets this requirement by integrating the power of SAP BusinessObjects WebIntelligence with the visualisation capabilities of Xcelsius. It enables speed-of-thought analysis, supporting the user through the process of reviewing information, asking a question, studying the response, and then seeking further information, all within a single tool. The results can be passed to SAP BusinessObjects Explorer, for further in-depth data mining and data segmentation.

READY ACCESS TO IN-DEPTH DATA

Data presented in a dashboard must be easy to understand. The visualisation tools and controls in Xcelsius aid comprehension and encourage user interaction. XWIS brings additional support to guide users through interactive analysis and in-depth navigation of the underlying data, drilling through layers of detail and slicing-and-dicing across dimensions.

COLLABORATION

Decisions and the resultant actions are rarely taken in isolation. XWIS encourages sharing of information by enabling dashboards and the underlying data to be embedded in MS Office applications and distributed by email. Users can communicate through Instant Messenger™ style discussions, linked to specific reports.

EMPOWERING BUSINESS USERS

XWIS encourages business users to take ownership of their dashboards, and not need the support of IT every time a change to a dashboard is required. XWIS components are readily maintained by users, enabling them to change dimensions and data views through an innovative slice-and-dice control. Users can readily switch between tabular reports, tree views and cross-tabs to gain maximum understanding of the data.



XWIS – In Depth

ABOUT XWIS AND ITS AUTHORS

XWIS – the Xcelsius WebIntelligence Integration Suite – was developed by Antivia, a company formed by a team of business intelligence veterans. Their vision is to exploit the way that Web 2.0 technologies and techniques are transforming the way in which the business world expects to access and use information.

Comset are authorised Antivia partners, senior members of the two companies having known each other for many years. As an SAP BusinessObjects Gold Partner, Comset have the skills and experience to help your organisation to exploit this exciting new approach to deploying dashboards across the enterprise.

THE CHALLENGE

Whilst Xcelsius delivers a visually attractive and highly functional dashboard, connecting it to enterprise data can be a challenge. Within the SAP BusinessObjects suite, the options are to use web services to connect to your database, XML mapping, or Live Office (where you will need to create BusinessObjects reports and connect them to an Excel file). The first two are likely to need specialist IT resource and the third is time-consuming, inflexible and has inherent limits in the amount of data that can be pulled through. All three approaches impose restrictions on navigation/drill-down and lack ad hoc capabilities.

THE XWIS APPROACH

XWIS is a suite of Xcelsius add-in components which connect directly to the data that has been cached on the BusinessObjects Enterprise Server, in WebIntelligence reports. XWIS does not need to run 'queries' against the database and can easily access the information stored within reports that, for example, could have been refreshed overnight. This means XWIS performs many times faster and is far more scalable than alternative approaches. It also means that reports no longer have to be written with the requirements of a dashboard display in mind.

The XWIS components allow dashboard users to decide for themselves how much information they wish to view and also how they want to view it - cross-tab, tabular, tree view: all are fully drillable on any of the dimensions the user selects. This provides the user with a true WebIntelligence experience, but inside Xcelsius and without having to write a single formula in an Excel spreadsheet. The results can be passed to SAP BusinessObjects Explorer, for further in-depth data mining and segmentation, indeed this is the only way that we are aware of that enables you to create an Explorer analysis from a WebIntelligence report.

Support is inbuilt for query prompts and the dashboard designer has the ability to control how users will be able to drill through the information. XWIS enables you to bind Xcelsius controls together, so that an action on one influences the behaviour of another - so for example from a tabular report of sales by city, you can highlight the five, say, that you are interested in and instantly see just those five in a pie chart.

XWIS dashboards are portable. Users can disconnect and work offline, XWIS pulls the dashboard itself and the underlying data into a secure environment, subject to the same access controls as you would experience when online, ensuring that security is not compromised.

Finally, XWIS includes a component that connects dashboard users together with Instant Messenger™ like discussions that are always live and that are independent of how a dashboard is delivered. Whether you send a dashboard to BusinessObjects InfoView or embed the same dashboard in a PowerPoint presentation, users remain connected and are able to collaborate around the information delivered in both environments.

SUMMARY

For organisations with large and complex data visualisation requirements, XWIS enables business users to see, understand and share data more quickly and more easily than ever before, supporting smarter, faster decisions and shared understanding of business performance.

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