

**Minutes of the Decision Support/Data Warehousing Constituent Group
EDUCAUSE 2000**

Nashville, TN Opryland Hotel & Convention Center

Wednesday, October 11, 2000, 12:45 PM – 2:15 PM

Thursday, October 12, 2000, 4:45 PM – 6:00 PM

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Attendees: There were two sessions for this constituent group. The first session had 43 attendees from a wide variety of institutions. We had a mix of attendees who were new to decision support/data warehousing and those who had been in the business for several years. The room was filled to capacity and additional chairs had to be brought in to accommodate attendees. The follow-up session included 26 attendees. Attendance sheet with email addresses from first session was shared with attendees at second session. It is recommended that two sessions be held again next year, as one would not have allowed enough time to discuss the desired topics.

Format: The session opened with introductions (name & institution) and desired topics of discussion. After topics were recorded an open discussion was held on each topic.

Items of Business:

- The proposal for EDUCAUSE to acquire Chuck Thomas' data definitions work for the purpose of finding an ongoing sustainable home for that work was reviewed by the EDUCAUSE Advisory Group on Administrative Information Systems and Services (EAGAISS) in February 2000. The proposal was not approved because the Advisory Group felt that the proposal did not generate the kind of enthusiasm needed to go forward and several members felt that maintaining data definitions longer term was both expensive and of diminishing value. Information about Data Definitions for Colleges and Universities can be found at the following web site:
<http://www.nchems.org/Publications/chessdatadef.htm>

Informal Survey of Attendees:

Data Warehouse Databases Used by Attendees:

Database	# of Institutions
Oracle	14
Sybase	3
SQL Server	3
Informix	1

Source Applications Feeding Data Warehouses Used by Attendees:

Application Vendor # of Institutions

Peoplesoft	6
Banner	7
SCT+	3
CARS	1
Oracle	1
Datatel	3
Homegrown	4

Query Tools Used by Attendees:

Query Tool	# of Institutions
Brio	8 (4 using web)
Business Objects	5 (1 using web)
Cognos	3
SAS	5
MS Access	1
Filemaker	1.5
Paradox	1
Microstrategy	1

ETL Tools Used by Attendees:

Informatica
Sagent
DataStage
SAS
Oracle
Homegrown

Resource Information:

- DW Listserv – dwlist-request@datawarehousing.com
- EDUCAUSE Library: <http://www.educause.edu/memdir/cg/ds.html>
- Higher Education Data Warehouse Configurations:
<http://www.georgetown.edu/users/allanr/dwconfig/>
- Ralph Kimball, Data Warehouse Toolkit

Topics Discussed:

- Getting started building a data warehouse – advice from those who have been there: get buy-in and backing from upper level administration; choose a small proof of concept project, preferably one that solves an unmet need; utilize resources (web, books, listservs) and talk to colleagues about best methodology, architecture (star schemas, data marts, operational data stores, etc.) and tools for your institution.
- For whom are you building your data warehouse? Data warehouses are built for a wide variety of customers – they are all end users of data but can vary widely – academic department, Dean’s Office, Service Office (e.g. Personnel, Finance

Office), institutional researchers, high level campus administrators. In some cases Institutional Research Offices were leading the warehouse efforts, in others they were customers along with service offices and end users.

- Data delivery methods - Data delivery methods vary widely and depending on the audience. It was agreed that the majority of users want to be presented with results and do not want to build and manipulate queries themselves. Several institutions have shifted the focus of delivery methods from ad hoc to repository based web reporting. The following methods were used to deliver data: email, cold fusion web forms, standardized reports, delivered extracts, spreadsheet files, standardized query libraries, and portals.
- What kind of access do institutions grant for distributing data from the data warehouse? The majority of institutions had secured access where users were limited to seeing the data for their unit(s). Some institutions are using the security structures from their source applications to grant security to warehouse data. Several institutions were successful in opening up access such that authorized departmental users had access to data for the entire institution. It was acknowledged that securing data adds to the cost of maintenance – developing security structures and administering security.
- What resources does it take to support and maintain a data warehouse? Dedicated support for data warehousing varied widely across institutions ranging from 2 to 15 FTE. Support comes from a mix of IT and functional personnel: database administrator, data administrators, data modelers, functional end users, data subset functional managers, application programmers, and operations staff.
- Measures of performance/accountability – Some of the following were measured by institutions: number of data subsets, number of users, number of tables/views, number of logins, number of repository reports, running time of queries, utilization by department, service quality, and user satisfaction. Some institutions provide their service offices with usage reports so that they can see the utilization by their customers. Institutions utilize auditing to assess the usage. One institution monitors for long running queries and assists users in building more efficient queries in such circumstances.
- Training – Most institutions offer data training and query tool training. Some require data training before a subset is released.
- What relationship is the relationship between your data warehouse and your directory service (LDAP) and/or other applications? The topic of directory service was recognized as one on the horizon.
- Other topics that were not explored fully – archiving, business planning, use of portals, and financial support.