

Decision Support/Data Warehousing Constituent Group Meeting Minutes



Session: Wednesday, November 5, 4:55 – 6:10 p.m. (40 participants)

Facilitator: **Carita M. Gillotte**, Director, Database Application Services, George Mason University
John Rome, Director, Data Administration and Data Warehouse, Arizona State

The session opened with introductions from each institution to include name, role, the institution's experience with data warehouses, ETL tools, reporting tools, secure Web distribution of reports and desired topics for discussion.

Summary of Introductions: Some schools have years of data warehousing experience, while others were looking for start-up direction and 'lessons learned'. Most schools had SCT Banner or PeopleSoft administrative applications; however, there were SIS Plus and Datatel schools present. Brio, Cognos, and Crystal Reports were the reporting tools used by the greatest number of schools, although others mentioned Discoverer, Oracle Reports and Focus. Schools with production data marts shared their experiences with development, while schools new to this technology raised questions about technologies, support, and budget. There was a desire by several of the small schools (with small budgets and low resources) to outline the tasks necessary to establish a simple data mart to handle reporting needs. Another school raised the question on issues that need to be resolved when tying together multiple campuses into one data warehouse for common reporting.

It was suggested that the group's listserv be used more effectively to ask questions and share information between schools, eliminating each from 'reinventing the wheel', enabling the schools just starting with building data warehouses to learn from those who have experience. It was highly recommended that the schools collaborate more effectively to get price concessions from the large Reporting Tool vendors --- Brio and Cognos for example, as the cost of the site licenses approach (and exceed) one million dollars. The group discussed their concern about the pending merger of Brio with Hyperion and Crystal Reports with Business Objects, and the effect that these mergers will have on current support.

Topics Discussed: (Only five of the topics were discussed due to time limitations. The suggestion was made that these questions be posted to the listserv for further discussion.)

- How to handle historical data during implementation of new ERP, should it be converted or archived on a CD or in a data warehouse?
 - Consider if conversion is worth the time and effort, could data be better summarized with detail written to CD or put in a historical data mart.
- Data Delivery over the Web:
 - All the sophisticated reporting tools like Crystal, Brio, and Business Intelligence products offer built-in security, usually not tied into legacy systems security.
 - Only one institution uses SCT e-print to distribute reports over the Web using Banner finance security.
- Executive Reporting Tools:
 - Brio and Cognos are in use by the majority of schools, although others report using Crystal, Discoverer, Focus and other tools. Concern was expressed about the Brio merger and how it will affect support.
 - A suggestion was raised that schools should work together collectively to get better license agreements and support contracts from the major vendors.
- Business Objects – merge with Crystal
 - Concern was raised about the effect of the merger on current Crystal customers.
- Secure Distribution
- Executive Dashboards
 - Texas A&M was mentioned as a source of an excellent dashboard which can be viewed on their Web site.
- Institutional Research and Reporting
- Metadata
- SAP Business Warehouse
- End-User ad-hoc reporting
- SCT Data Warehouse
- Subcommittee Proposal
- Brio8 Users and merge with Hyperion

- Tools and Refreshes/Reloads
- Shadow Systems
- Small School and no budget
- Multi College/Campus consolidation
- Simple startup tools/tasks
- ETL Tools
- Collaboration between institutions – “reinvent the wheel”

Submitted by:

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