

Reports automation saves hours for analysts

Dell's Enterprise Business Intelligence group improves productivity by 40 percent and streamlines routine reporting.



“Toad Intelligence Central is great because we have different people reporting information at different times. Having one centralized location enables us to streamline the process.”

Prashant Govindaraj, Business Intelligence Advisor, Enterprise Business Intelligence, Dell

CUSTOMER PROFILE



Company	Dell
Industry	Hardware, software and peripherals
Country	United States
Employees	5,000+
Website	www.dell.com

BUSINESS NEED

The Enterprise Business Intelligence group at Dell needed a way to streamline its increasing workload and provide an integrated reporting process for its internal customers.

SOLUTION

The analyst team implemented Toad Intelligence Central, along with Toad Data Point, to automate business reports and save more than three hours a day per analyst.

BENEFITS

- Automated reporting process for a streamlined workflow
- Freed up 40 percent of analysts' time to focus on strategic initiatives
- Rapid prototyping before merging with enterprise data integration flows

SOLUTIONS AT A GLANCE

- Business Intelligence and Big Data Analytics

The Enterprise Business Intelligence team at Dell helps internal customers reconcile different systems of record — for internal productivity reports, operational expenses or call center performance. For each new project, the team’s analysts create custom scripts to blend data from a range of data sources, usually residing in multiple application databases.

Internal customers to this team include tech support engineers, call centers, help desk teams, global support and distribution. These teams need help streamlining their own workloads to better serve their customers. They come to the Enterprise Business Intelligence group to identify opportunities for improving performance.

“We help our customers better understand how to meet their goals within the realities of running their business,” says Prashant Govindaraj, Business Intelligence Advisor for Enterprise Business Intelligence. “Sometimes that requires a lot of smart analysis, and sometimes it is simply a matter of crunching a large amount of data.”

Until recently, the analyst team did much of this work manually. They had to develop and test individual scripts to gather data from applications, databases and other file-based sources. Different customers asked for different reports at different frequencies. The team had to use a lot of resources and time to generate reports for these stakeholders. “It could be a very tedious job — we had to check the reports at various intervals during the day,” Govindaraj says. “Some even had to be checked in the middle of the night.”

As their business — and the amount of available business data — expanded, the Enterprise Business Intelligence team knew it needed to find a way to streamline its workflow, so Govindaraj and his colleagues looked into how Toad

productivity solutions might help. Toad Data Point coupled with Toad Intelligence Central allowed the team to easily access data and automatically schedule reports using a centralized server — and virtually eliminate time spent on manual routine reports.

STREAMLINED WORKFLOW

Data comes to the Enterprise Business Intelligence team from all over Dell via different data streams — 80 percent or more comes through Dell’s large Teradata database and the remainder comes through individual SQL servers. Some data comes from call centers through applications such as Avaya, which streams information into Teradata, and spreadsheet-based sources from customers.

This data — call volume reports, backlogs, procurement details, ticket response time and much more — is collected and prepped with the easy-to-use visual interface in Toad Data Point, through heterogeneous cross-connection queries, profiling and transformation routines. Once the data is ready for analysis, the workflows are published and scheduled on Toad Intelligence Central.

“The best thing about this solution is that we can automate so many tasks. And the learning curve is so short. Everything is self-explanatory and can be easily deployed.”

Boris Klincok, Business Intelligence Advisor, Enterprise Business Intelligence, Dell

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

SOFTWARE

Toad Intelligence Central

Toad Data Point

“Toad Intelligence Central is great because we have different people reporting information at different times,” Govindaraj says. “Having one centralized location enables us to streamline the process.”

Toad Intelligence Central automatically executes the entire data preparation workflow — from creating a heterogeneous cross-connection query and fixing data quality issues to publishing results in a spreadsheet on SharePoint and sending email notifications to customers on a periodic basis. Toad Intelligence Central gives the Enterprise Business Intelligence team centralized workflow management and provides a lens into reports that are being published and consumed. Integration with Active Directory and object-level security options makes Intelligence Central the perfect IT-managed self-service platform

Many of the internal customers who originally requested these insights use the data from the Toad Intelligence Central to create visual reports using Tableau and other tools at their disposal, while some will work with raw information in Excel. Many teams will prepare dashboards using key numbers that they can share with executives in their departments.

TIME SAVINGS

“Toad has really helped us reduce the amount of work being done by our reporting team,” Govindaraj says. “We helped them gain more bandwidth to do other jobs.”

Two team members are currently working with the Toad solution, and each has been able to save three or four hours per day — or about 40 percent of their time. Because of this success, the team hopes to add five or six more team members on the reporting side to give everyone more time to focus on strategic initiatives.

COMPLEMENTING AND EXTENDING AN ENTERPRISE DATA WAREHOUSE

Automation of this type of reporting helps the internal service teams stay future-ready. They are able to be agile with their data and no longer have to wait for IT to put all of their data streams together — a process that could take up to 12 months. The IT roadmap is very long, and it takes time for new requirements to be ingested into existing data integration streams and then to be included into the enterprise data warehouse.

Toad Data Point with Toad Intelligence Central has enabled the Enterprise Business Intelligence team to scale its offerings as customers demand. While the individual analyst is still applying query functionality, data profiling and transformations, automation allows the team to integrate more data across various systems on the fly and collaborate with other users in Toad Intelligence Central. The streamlined workflow also allows for more transparency in the reporting process.

“The best thing about this solution is that we can automate so many tasks,” says Boris Klincok, Business Intelligence Advisor for the Enterprise Business Intelligence group. “And the learning curve is so short. Everything is self-explanatory and can be easily deployed. The simplicity of the whole process is great.”

Klincok and his team love the fact that they can get to as many as 50 data sources in a single application for a consistent user experience.

CUSTOMIZABLE ADMINISTRATION

In addition to a streamlined workflow and agile analysis process, the Toad solution offers a governed and secure sandbox environment, Klincok says. “Our security policy requires us to change security passwords every two months — which can be quite cumbersome, given the number

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Prashant Govindaraj, Business Intelligence Advisor, Enterprise Business Intelligence, Dell



of people who access all of this information. Toad Data Point can update the passwords in batches and manage user data more easily.”

Klincok says that they also can introduce additional access controls for the server admin to securely manage based on the team strategy. “In one case, a team wanted only NT users to be part of the Toad system, and we were able to provide that kind of flexibility,” Klincok says. “It’s very customizable in terms of how you want to manage the server.”

“The bottom line is that it saves time for our reporting team and has helped us reduce redundancy,” Govindaraj says. “It is a flexible and easily adaptable solution.”

ABOUT QUEST

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