



Business Intelligence & Information Management  
Symposium Community

# Trip Report

## Business Intelligence & Information Management Symposium Community

Members: 325

### Key Takeaways

A key theme in the business intelligence (BI) and information management community was expanding the use of BI within the organization and developing BI competencies. In the sessions, attendees heard examples of enterprises using BI to drive strategic transformation. Successful companies challenge sacred assumptions for making decisions, run experiments to validate or correct them, and thus can debunk old rules of thumb about running the business. Leaders of BI and information management initiatives have to do a better job of marketing their successes and provide a convincing argument for the risks of doing nothing. They also have to get over their fear of putting out poor-quality data because the business can't wait till it's scrubbed clean. The business needs to use the data so that BI leaders can see what to fix and what level of data quality is good enough.

### Conference Highlights

#### Business Intelligence: Emerging Trends and Technologies

BI leaders need to make information and analysis better suit business decisions. BI isn't just analyst-driven anymore; it's pervasive and can be used for strategic as well as process-optimization decisions. While the market has consolidated significantly in the past year, innovation is still coming from nontraditional and emerging vendors. New technologies are coming for information access, analysis and presentation. Innovation will occur with sourcing options, such as software as a service, in addition to technology. Recommendations:

- Survey business decision makers' satisfaction regarding the information and analysis they're receiving today. It helps identify pain points that need to be addressed.
- Integrate BI technologies, competencies (business, technology and analyst) and program management within a BI competency center to coordinate multiple activities and skills necessary to develop and deploy BI initiatives.
- Take a portfolio approach to BI applications. Silos of BI applications and analysis create barriers to getting a more holistic view of the business.

#### Community-Based Collaboration: Power to the People

The speaker asked how many people have Facebook accounts. About one-third of attendees raised their hands. The top-five benefits of communities are: wider participation by people, problem solving, increased loyalty and trust, knowledge building, and expertise location. Recommendations:

- Focus on improving established communities first.
- Describe guardrails of what not to do: If you wouldn't do it in real life, then don't do it online.

#### Ideation Best Practices

Create a strong process for generating and evaluating ideas, then buy tools to support it. Idea management tools support idea collection, evaluation and refinement. Idea management applications will morph from stand-alone products to become integrated with product life cycle management and social networking tools. Recommendations:

- Define what each team needs to do and why it's important for the business.
- Explain what you did with each idea, even if you decide not to use it.

#### The Future of Search in the Post-Google Era

Information access technology will locate and analyze more than 90% of data in more than 50% of Global 2000 enterprises by 2012. Enterprise workers expect search to gather into a single skein the threads from internal data sources, content sources, business applications, collaboration systems and databases. BI and search have parallel capabilities but different information and user interaction styles. Recommendations:

- List what workers are searching for to determine the scope of the challenge.
- Inventory search vendors to see whether their relevancy models cover all of this search universe.

## How Google's, Microsoft's and IBM's Cloud Strategies Will Rain on Your Plans

Cloud computing involves drawing IT services from Internet utilities at dramatically lower cost with massive scalability. Cloud computing is unstoppable — but it will not rule all (or most) of enterprise computing over the next decade. It will reshape many existing markets and create some new ones. Recommendations:

- Look beyond incumbent vendors to what new players can offer.
- Remember, it's not what you buy, it's how you use it. Design around outcomes, not products.

## Keynotes

### Welcome Address

CEOs want cost reduction, more flexibility, support for growth from the IT organization, regardless of the economy. That's why 80% of CIOs expect major changes in the next three years — 40% of CIOs expect transformational change, according to Gartner's latest CIO Survey. Expect old metrics (such as IT spending as percent of revenue) to give way to new metrics (such as IT spending needed to gain new clients). 70% of CIOs say their organizations don't have the right skills to create the needed change. Therefore:

- Focus on pivotal roles and competencies.
- Capitalize on talent globally.
- Make IT attractive to digital natives.

### Technology-Enabled Business Acceleration

Be counter-intuitive — while cutting costs, have other staff prepare for the return to growth. If you wait till recession ends, you'll lose months of opportunity. Schedule meetings with business executives to go over the project portfolio and decide what to keep and what to cut. Web 2.0 enables amazing productivity. Plenty of Fish, a dating site, has 2.5 million users per month, generates \$10 million a year in revenue, and is run by one full-time and one half-time worker. You need to figure out how to employ IT resources for competitive advantage. For example, a context-aware network would know where you are, what you're doing and what you need. You also need to provide mass-produced, repeatable services, not technology, to the business by:

- Developing a usage measure like the kilowatt/hour.
- Changing IT workforce from caretakers of technology to service managers.

CIOs and other leaders need superlative communication and an ability to extend their influence throughout the enterprise.

### A Look Into the Labs

Gartner analysts interviewed four research leaders from major IT vendors:

- Rich Friedrich, HP Labs
- David Douglas, Sun Labs
- Guido Jouret, Cisco Emerging Technologies Group
- Steve Hoover, Xerox Labs

#### ***What new technologies are you working on?***

Friedrich said HP is working on location-based and context-sensitive services. HP is also working with nanotech sensors worldwide. Challenges include the sheer mass of data gathered this way and privacy issues.

Jouret said that Cisco is working on technology for distance collaboration that includes things like connected whiteboards that allow two engineers to work on the same drawing simultaneously. Also, something called a HealthPresence Pod, a kiosk with connectors for medical equipment such as a stethoscope or blood pressure cuff, allowing doctors to examine patients over distances. He said enterprises need to ask themselves, "where do you collaborate" to make the most of this kind of technology.

Xerox is working on more sophisticated document scanning that can recognize and gather metadata from different document types and automatically compile that data. This can be very useful for things like legal discovery, where huge numbers of documents must be scanned for a particular data point.

#### ***What is most important to drive innovation?***

Strong enterprise leadership with vision, good communication and networking inside the enterprise. Hoover said: "Above all, know your customers."

## What People Asked About

Attendees in the BI and information management community commonly asked the following questions:

### **What is the relationship between master data management (MDM) and BI?**

The real question here is, “how do I model my business?” MDM involves managing the elements of information that are pertinent to describe the business. Start by defining the performance metrics and associated information that maps to your model of the business outcomes. Since the business changes over time, your model will have to evolve as well. The model should reveal how decisions need to be made in your company and what information is needed to make those decisions. This understanding should guide the design of BI projects, which should funnel the appropriate information to the decision makers located on the model.

### **How do I get people involved in communities?**

State the community’s objective in business terms so participants can see why it’s important. Make the communities’ information visible to everyone as well as who is reading it, and have executives participate. If people can see what the CEO is reading and doing, everyone will read and do likewise. You need to get the right skills involved in the various phases of the activity cycle. For example, sponsors and leaders should participate in communities during the “vision” phase, whereas in the “build” phase, engineers, technologists and product teams should participate.

### **Our people spend too much time in communities — how do we pull them back to their main jobs?**

Your management doesn’t understand that this is how people work now. Communities are where work gets done.

### **What tools do you suggest to support ideation?**

This is not the right first step. Set up a good process first. Set out explicit goals. Run all ideas through the community for feedback. There are tools out there. But consider the scale of your ideation program — some tools are not heavy-weight.

### **Are there any open-source solutions in this area?**

This question came up in almost every session, no matter what the technology area. The answer is almost always yes (though not for ideation). However, open-source software varies widely in maturity. You need to ensure that the functions for any tool you consider are mature enough for your needs. And there are other issues to watch out for with open source — for example, open-source applications are not public property, you’ll need to buy licenses.

## Things to Watch For

**Location-based or context-aware services:** This theme was evident throughout the sessions. The idea is that the network would know who you are, where you are, what device you’re using, and what your role and history are. Then the network would provide what you need in a format you can use. Attendees learned about a BI initiative in Richmond, Virginia, where the police gathered all information relevant to crime — not just the information that was already in their systems, but also information such as conventions and holidays — and mapped out where crime occurs and under what circumstances. The system deployed this information to patrol cars so police could have a view of the larger context of crime delivered in real time.

**Multiple relevancy models:** The era of one search engine that can handle all enterprise data is coming to an end. Relevancy cannot be improved enough to handle all the diverse sources of information, such as YouTube videos and information about relationships from social network sites. The IT organization has to bring multiple relevancy models into the enterprise rather than forcing information architects to have to choose one.

**Cloud computing:** This is coming. The economies of scale are astounding. For example, the cost of online e-mail is one-tenth that of on-premises enterprise e-mail, while users get 20 times the amount of storage. Major vendors are exploring cloud computing. For example, IBM has broken with its usual approach to product rollouts by exposing what’s in its labs and getting products out within 12 months.

## Interactive Polling Results

A number of sessions polled attendees about hot topics.

### **Does your organization ban access to social sites such as Facebook?**

Yes — 25%  
No — 68%  
Don’t Know — 7%

### **Dozens of people and parties will have the power to influence business direction, services, products and reputation, almost randomly, across global markets, outside official channels, through a potentially infinite Web and at a head-spinning pace.**

Strongly Disagree — 2%  
Somewhat Disagree — 12%  
Somewhat Agree — 47%  
Strongly Agree — 39%

### **IT practitioners create innovative solutions to business needs almost all the time.**

Agree — 35%  
Disagree — 57%  
Undecided — 8%

### **Are you using Google’s infrastructure or applications in your enterprise?**

Yes — 46%  
No — 50%  
Don’t Know — 4%

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