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Cognos A Leader In BI Reporting And Analysis Platforms

The Forrester Wave™ Vendor Summary, Q1 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cognos 8 Business Intelligence (BI) offers a single, strong BI reporting and analysis product for support of analytic and enterprise reporting. The product is strong in all three areas — analytic functionality, application development, and usability with comprehensive support for unification, internationalization, and open APIs, and strong support for OLAP, query, metadata, dashboards, and scorecards. Cognos is one of a growing number of vendors — including Actuate, Business Objects, Hyperion, Microsoft, and MicroStrategy — that offer both analytic and enterprise reporting capabilities. However, Cognos 8 BI is a completely new, Web-based product that incorporates much of the functionality from Cognos legacy BI products such as PowerPlay, Metrics Manager, Impromptu, ReportNet, and others. Based on our evaluation, Cognos is a leader in both analytic and enterprise reporting.

COGNOS — BEST SUITED FOR COMBINING BI AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Cognos has a rich history of developing BI tools for specific purposes such as query, OLAP, or scorecards. For the past five years, Cognos has been reinventing itself as a company committed to defining performance management through acquisitions of budgeting and planning products, along with re-architecting core BI capabilities in a services-oriented architecture (SOA) — the first of which was ReportNet. The delivery of Cognos 8 BI represents a watershed moment in Cognos' evolution, as this clearly positions Cognos well for operational BI applications, and standardization initiatives within large enterprises.¹

Forrester evaluated Cognos' current offering and strategy for business intelligence reporting and analysis against approximately 92 criteria (see Figure 1). Overall, the product offers strong unification and component-based architectural features but lacks process and rule association and a strong integration with Microsoft Office products. This means the product is an especially good fit for buyers that:

- **Demand a strong SOA BI product.** Cognos' BI product is ideally suited to both IT app development groups as well as ISVs looking to embed robust reporting and analysis capabilities into enterprise applications.
- **Want to standardize on a single BI reporting and analysis product.** Cognos 8 BI includes many of the requisite reporting and analysis capabilities that companies are trying to standardize on.

To see how Cognos stacks up against nine other competitors, see the Forrester Wave™ evaluation of the BI reporting and analysis market.²

Figure 1 Cognos 8 BI Evaluation Overview

CURRENT OFFERING	
Analytic functionality	Cognos 8 Business Intelligence (BI) offers strong support for analytic functionality with its strong OLAP and query functionality, along with its general capacity for data access and limited support for advanced analytics and business rule and process capability.
Usability	Cognos 8 BI offers strong support for usability with its comprehensive unification and internationalization functionality, along with its general capacity for layout and formatting and basic support for Microsoft Office integration and ease of use.
Application development	Cognos 8 BI offers strong support for application development with its comprehensive open APIs and Web services functionality, along with its strong metadata, security and administration, dashboard and scorecard capabilities, general capacity for report dissemination, basic support for report development, and application scalability.
STRATEGY	
Product direction	Cognos 8 BI offers comprehensive product direction.
Commitment	Cognos 8 BI offers a strong commitment to BI.
Pricing and licensing	Cognos 8 BI offers general support for pricing and licensing.
MARKET PRESENCE	
Company financials	Cognos is in a very strong financial position.
Installed base	Cognos has a large and growing customer base.

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.



Go online to download additional in-depth data and scores for this vendor and other vendors included in this Forrester Wave evaluation.



SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Online Resource

The underlying spreadsheet for Figure 1 is available online. The spreadsheet includes more detailed data and scores for this vendor.

This detailed data and scores for this vendor are also available online through an Excel-based vendor comparison tool that provides detailed product evaluations and customizable rankings.

Forrester Wave Methodology

We conduct primary research to develop a list of vendors that meet our criteria to be evaluated in this market. From that initial pool of vendors, we narrow our final list to those presented here. We choose these vendors based on: 1) product fit; 2) customer success; and 3) Forrester client demand. We eliminate vendors that have limited customer references and products that don't fit the scope of our evaluation.

After examining past research, user need assessments, and vendor and expert interviews, we develop the initial evaluation criteria. To evaluate the vendors and their products against our set of criteria, we gather details of product qualifications through a combination of lab evaluations, questionnaires, demos, and/or discussions with client references. We send evaluations to the vendors for their review, and we adjust the evaluations to provide the most accurate view of vendor offerings and strategies.

We set default weightings to reflect our analysis of the needs of large user companies — and/or other scenarios as outlined in this document — and then score the vendors based on a clearly defined scale. These default weightings are intended only as a starting point, and readers are encouraged to adapt the weighting to fit their individual needs through the Excel-based tool. The final scores generate the graphical depiction of the market based on current offering, strategy, and market presence. Forrester intends to update vendor evaluations regularly as product capabilities and vendor strategies evolve.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Cognos has not only joined the short list of BI and platform vendors that can deliver these various reporting solutions on a single platform, but, in addition, it has raised the bar for how BI platforms must be capable of being integrated with the rest of the technology assets in a services-oriented environment. See the September 28, 2005, Tech Choices ["Cognos 8 BI Redefines Cognos' BI Approach And Raises The Bar For Integrated BI Platforms."](#)
- ² Forrester evaluated 10 leading BI, database, and application vendors across 92 criteria and found Business Objects has established early BI platform leadership, followed by Cognos and Hyperion. MicroStrategy and SAS offer strong enterprise analytics, while Actuate and Information Builders are strong in enterprise reporting and scalability. Microsoft's latest release offers tighter integration with Microsoft Office, while Oracle and SAP emphasize integration with their respective enterprise applications over deeper reporting functionality. See the February 8, 2006, Tech Choices ["The Forrester Wave™: BI Reporting And Analysis Platforms, Q1 2006."](#)