



Trends

Dashboard trends for 2010.

By Lyndsay Wise, Chief Analyst, Wise Analytics.

The dashboard industry has seen many new developments within the past year that will continue to expand into 2010. Some of these trends include the expansion of operational dashboards and embedded analytics, the use of geo-spatial information within dashboards, the role of social media applications within BI and dashboards, and the integration of multiple data types. Each of these will continue to increase in importance and usage this coming year as a result of technology advancements and customer demand.

1. Operational dashboards

As companies become more familiar with dashboards, the way in which they apply the technology within their organizations change. This means that companies move from using analytics, reporting, and dashboards against a data warehouse to looking at real-time data and managing operations through the use of data visualization. This use of operational dashboards will become more common as companies start to look at what is happening on a daily basis within their businesses and using BI tools to get and manage that information. Because of the new ability to use BI for multiple purposes, its popularity and general use will grow within companies already using BI for advanced analytics.

2. Embedded analytics

Although the concept of embedded analytics appears similar to the expansion of operational dashboard adoption, the use of analytics within operational systems differs slightly. Instead of business intelligence being a separate entity from an organization's ERP or CRM system, BI grade analytics are now being embedded within operational systems. In many cases, operational solution providers OEM best of breed analytics solutions within their software offerings to provide their customers with BI functionality and a dashboard front-end within their applications. This form of dashboard use will become more popular as businesses want seamless interaction between transactional and analytical systems.

3. Geo-spatial data visualization

The inclusion of geo-spatial analysis within dashboards helps bring analytics to the next level. For organizations looking at product, geographical, or customer data, the ability to identify trends by looking at geographic regions helps identify trends more quickly. Organizations no longer have to deduce what correlations exist based on geography because they can now visualize it. As dashboards continue to improve their visualization capabilities, the integration of various forms of visualizations – maps, charts, graphs, video, etc. – will become a common use among organizations looking to get a full picture of their supply chain, customer base, and overall business operations. Solution providers will continue to improve their visualization capabilities by taking advantage of interactive capabilities with the goal of improving the end user experience.

4. Social media integration

Taking interactivity and advanced visualization to the next level, solution providers are slowly integrating social networking functions into their solutions. Because of the ability to create powerful interactions and extend overall ease of use, more solution providers will be focusing on developing solutions that mimic social media and Web 2.0 interactions. By doing so, the role of dashboards will become more popular and more broadly applied within organizations because of the increase in usability and broader interaction capabilities.

5. Multiple data sources and data types

As business and competitive pressures mount and as organizations are required to get the broadest possible business perspective to identify issues and opportunities in a timely fashion, the integration of varied data sources becomes essential. The integration of internal and external based data from both structured and unstructured sources becomes essential to more advanced uses of BI and general analytics. Whether this is customer sentiment analysis from CRM solutions and online reviews, or competitive analyses, the reality is that in order to stay ahead of competitors, companies will be required to integrate various information sources to get additional value from their information. Vendors are beginning to develop business focused applications that take these requirements into account and that offer customers ready made solutions that target business issues being faced by companies within different vertical markets.

Looking ahead

2010 promises to be an interesting year in relation to advancements in current dashboard product offerings as well as new market entrants looking to expand the space and to control market share. Consequently, there will be more competition than ever related to providing easy to use, business facing applications, and dashboard experiences to end users.

About the Author:

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