



## Enhancing Business Intelligence with Location

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One of the business buzzwords over the last few years has been business intelligence (BI), but what does it mean? And how can linking location help your organisation to derive greater value from your BI solutions?

The premise behind BI is to be able to look quickly at business information and understand what impact different situations will have on a business. Location intelligence (LI) extends on this ability to analyse information through the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to link corporate information to location data, such as businesses to addresses, buildings to deliveries, or streets within a network.

Gartner recognises GIS as a major maturing technology with a value and benefits profile similar to that of BI, and expects interactive visualisation to become the common front end to analytical applications over the next couple of years (source: Gartner 2008 Business Intelligence Summit). By linking location to corporate information, organisations can use location intelligence to make better decisions, enhance planning capabilities, and achieve real business benefits.

For the third year in a row, Gartner has ranked BI applications as the top technology priority in its 2008 Executive Programs survey of 1500 CIOs. CIOs understand that they must implement a BI strategy to aid in improving customer service and to mine valuable sales and marketing information from the mountains of data across their business.

BI and LI have the same premise, to enable organisations to make the most out of organisational information. 80 per cent of data held within organisations contains a location element. By utilising LI, organisations can take BI to the next level and truly analyse business information in an easy to view format.

If a picture is worth a 1,000 words then a location intelligence solution is worth a 1,000 databases. Location intelligence enables the integration of multiple corporate systems without complex documents to analyse to make business decisions. Information is able to be viewed in a graphic format that takes into account context. Essentially enhancing BI practices already in place in organisations.

By integrating business intelligence tools with location intelligence, you can ensure that your organisation can make the most of their corporate information, no matter what system it is stored in. For example, transport and logistics organisation are looking at the possibilities of linking BI and LI to accurately predict deliveries to customers, maximise the use of assets, measure the performance of fleets and assess customer satisfaction.

Companies that integrate location intelligence into business intelligence practices will see increased benefits across the entire organisation.

The integration of business intelligence and location intelligence is becoming increasingly prevalent in the utilities sector, with many utilities finding that the complimentary technologies provide a powerful decision support tool. By being able to view BI information geographically, stakeholders from all areas of a business can drill

down to detailed and current information to ensure they can quickly make the best business decision possible. In a power utility, this would allow the organisation's key stakeholders to view outage information in a location context, ensuring they can quickly make the best business decision possible in times of a power outage or storm event.

Location intelligence solutions and GIS can provide multi-dimensional analysis and bring data quickly and visually into business intelligence. By integrating the 'where' element into BI, organisations can turn information in the business into an asset for insight and decision making.

LI allows the integration of many data sources such as customer information, office locations, demographics of areas and supply chain data. One of the benefits of LI is customer service improvement. The ability to link multiple systems to give an overview of all information held by an organisation in one easy to view format, enables organisations to provide up to date information to customers.

Retail organisations are also seeing real benefits through the use of BI and LI in store and product management. LI is able to bring a new element to BI in the form of demographics of the area in which the store is located. Retailers are able to analyse the success of products in each store and from state to state. This in turn enables them to position stores more effectively, tailor offerings to the specific store and analyse the performance of each store.

By adding location to BI, organisations are able to link the user-friendly geographical and analytical capabilities of LI with enterprise-wide information to make more informed decisions. This can be done either through a map interface or the through the BI interface.

By integrating BI and LI, organisations have the ability to take advantage of all the enterprise and customer data they hold. By allowing access to, and management of increasing volumes of geographic and business data critical to a wide-range of business applications and projects, organisations are able to make more informed business decisions.