Expert IT Solutions Newsletter

Issue 13 April 2016

Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter for the year. This time we'll introduce our new website, as well as look at what Business Intelligence (BI) is and a service to make BI easy to use– PowerBI.
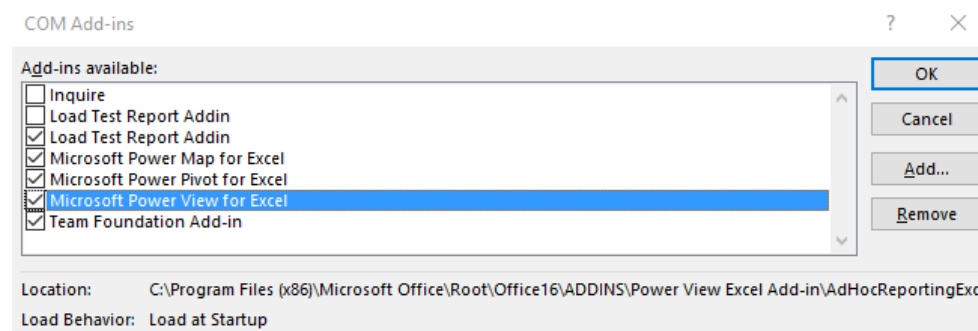
Business Intelligence

BI is an IT buzzword that's frequently used today. While it might sound complex and only applicable to big business, nothing could be further from the truth.

The basic idea is to use data your business is collecting such as *who* bought *what*, *when* or the most popular type of *service* you offer to a particular *customer segment* or the most common *reason* for parents choosing your school for their children. BI is then used "connect the dots" or unearth patterns that aren't immediately apparent. These insights are then used to drive changes in your business model, improving processes and customer satisfaction.

In the past BI was indeed an IT tool used only by large businesses (think the 1000's of servers that provide "other people who bought this book also bought…" on Amazon for instance) because of the investment in hardware to run it, along with the programming expertise to construct models.
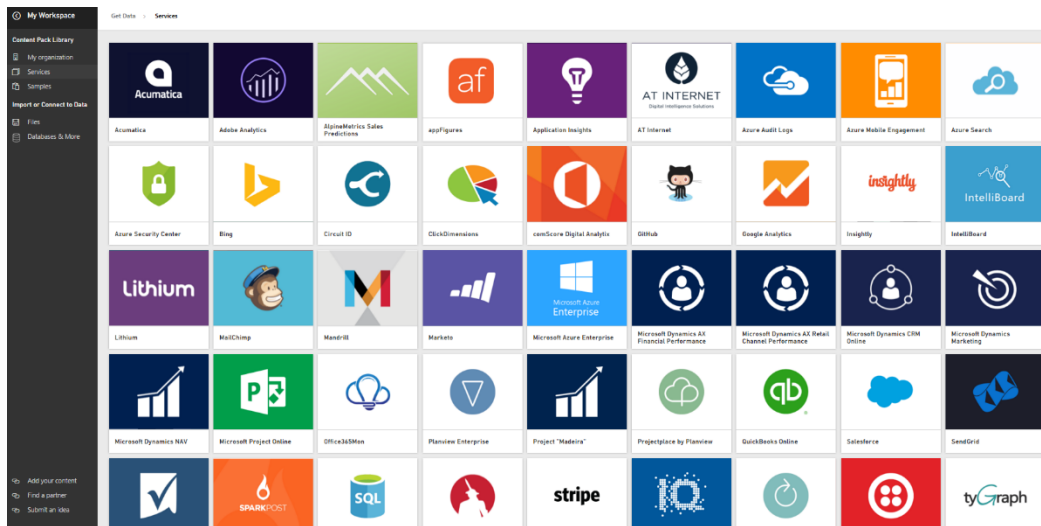
This is changing and BI tools are now available for the smallest business, and more importantly they're easy to use. Excel has been able to do a fair bit of BI in the last few versions through Power View, Power Map and Power Pivot. These tools aren't loaded by default; you have to add them manually to activate them. File – Options – Add Ins – COM Add ins – Go:

This gives you another tab in Excel and tools to import, sort and manipulate data. For a good step by step starting tutorial by Microsoft see here.
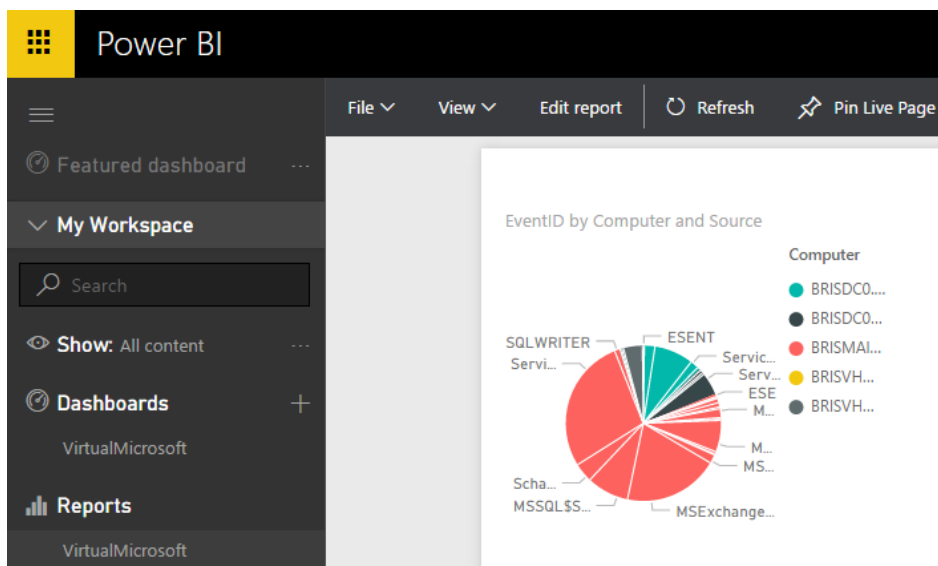
If Excel isn't your forte there's another good starting point in PowerBI. This cloud based service is easy to use and quick to get started with, again with some excellent videos and tutorials. It allows you to import data from a lot of different sources, connect different datasets together and visualise the results. These dashboards can then be saved and easily shared with others in your business. There's an online web-based console, a windows desktop application and mobile apps for iOS, Android and Windows Phone.

If some of your data is already in the cloud PowerBI offers content packs to facilitate gathering the data and visualising and reporting on it:

Of course you can also upload data from your on-premises data sources. Best of all it's free for smaller datasets up to 1 GB, see pricing here.

Here's an example of a dashboard I created based on monitoring of errors in the event logs of some production servers:

I think your business could benefit from incorporating this type of technology in your planning and if you think so too – please contact me for a discussion.

Website

After 18 years relying on word of mouth advertising Expert IT Solutions finally has its own website!

Find it at www.expertitsolutions.com.au, it's got sections for the services we offer, a little bit about me as well as a library of past editions of this newsletter.

IT Solutions

In a world of Information Technology

Ask Yourself

Are you a small business that struggles with providing efficient, business enhancing and reliable technology for your operations? Is your network a patchwork of different computers, different software versions and different places for storing important business data?

Do you have sales or service personnel on the road but no efficient means of supporting them with technology in the field, requiring manual entry of data back in the office? Is it impossible for your staff to access all the business information they need – no matter where they are located?

Do you worry that your data is insecure and that your business could be hacked easily? Are you unsure if your data backups are working; so that if your server was hit with a virus or the office burnt down you could continue running your business?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions – contact us for a:
1 hour, $90 including GST, network inspection and report.
This will give you solutions so that you can answer NO to every question above.

Newsletter

Subscribe to our FREE email newsletter

Have a look at it, feedback is very welcome.

In the next newsletter we'll look at Operations Management Suite (OMS) and why your business should have a disaster recovery plan and how we can create one, together.

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