



Cindi Howson
ASK LLC
email: cindihowson@biscorecard.com
Phone: 973-726-3754

Microsoft Business Intelligence

An overview of Microsoft's BI History and latest product release

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Background

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Evaluation Methodology

BIScorecard® evaluates vendor products with the view of a customer who wishes to buy a full BI suite or integrated toolset. Products are evaluated according to major functional areas ranging from query and reporting to architecture and administration. Within each functional area, we score vendors on various features. This list of criteria is based on:

- Features that customers often look for in evaluations
- Capabilities that are generally available in competitive products
- Vendor marketing claims that are either a point of differentiation or confusion

To evaluate products, we rely on vendor briefings and demonstrations, customer feedback, and newsgroup postings. To ensure an objective, consistent comparison of products, we also evaluate the software hands-on and refer to software documentation. Microsoft Analysis Services was first tested in 2001, Reporting Services initially in 2004 with updates in 2006. This evaluation is based on additional testing of these modules and Performance Point in Q1 2008.

Within a given feature category, 10 to 25 detailed features are considered (refer to the BIScorecard_Detail spreadsheet to see the full list of criteria and weightings). Summary scores are determined based on a weighted score within each category. In some cases, the summary percentages may not translate directly to the summary score for the following reasons: 1) a summary score may be rounded up or down when there is a wider gap among summary scores, 2) missing data points are considered in the totals and adjusted accordingly.

Each feature is assigned a score of 0 to 3:

Score	Explanation
3	Exceptional capabilities.
2	Very good capabilities.
1	Limited capabilities, difficult to do, or may require a work around.
0	Minimal capabilities out of the box. The software may require customization or coding to accomplish.
↑	A trend arrow indicates an imminent improvement in capabilities.