

LEVERAGING THE CRYSTAL REPORTS ECOSYSTEM

CONSIDERING MICROSOFT REPORTING SERVICES? THINK AGAIN!

Consider these factors before committing to Reporting Services:

- 1) **It's not free.** Because Reporting Services is a component of SQL Server, to expand your reporting capability, you will need additional SQL Server database reporting server licenses – even if all you need to do is expand your reporting capacity.
- 2) **It encourages poor IT practices.** Separating report processing from the database server is a well-known best practice. Combining report processing and database processing on the same server degrades database server scalability and performance.
- 3) **It has a limited choice of deployment options.** When embedding the Reporting Services viewer control into an application, your application must do the parameter prompting and data access. You also have fewer export options. The only way to have full functionality of Reporting Services is when viewing reports over the Web using SQL Server as a reporting server. You have to choose reduced functionality, on the one hand, or a heavyweight database server dependency on the other.
- 4) **It has limited browser support.** Full functionality is only available when using Internet Explorer. Important report viewing features such as search, document map, zoom, and more are unavailable when using Firefox and Safari.

This information sheet describes two ways to benefit from the Crystal Reports ecosystem:

1 Reporting in a .NET application using Crystal Reports 2008

2 Reporting with a standalone reporting server using Crystal Reports Server 2008

THE CRYSTAL REPORTS ECOSYSTEM



Unlike reporting tools that are bundled with databases, Crystal Reports® from Business Objects, an SAP company, provides a comprehensive set of solutions for all reporting needs.

More than just a report design tool, the Crystal Reports ecosystem covers the complete range of reporting requirements – from application integration to standalone reporting to large-scale business intelligence (BI) implementations.

REPORTING IN .NET APPLICATIONS WITH CRYSTAL REPORTS 2008

Crystal Reports 2008 delivers a unique set of advantages for the .NET developer.

ADVANTAGES OF CRYSTAL REPORTS 2008

Easy Deployment

- Crystal Reports 2008 is a self-contained reporting engine with no database dependency.
- It offers full support for all major browsers. All features work on Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Safari.
- The Crystal Reports 2008 runtime engine is easily deployed with your application using a choice of a 24 MB self-extracting .exe file, .MSI, or MSM file.
- When the Crystal Reports 2008 reporting engine is embedded in your application, you benefit from the same full prompting, exporting, and data access capabilities as in the server deployment model.
- Integrate with your .NET business logic by calling .NET code from within the report.

Improved End-User Interactivity

- The Crystal Reports 2008 viewers now support a new parameter panel, sort controls, and optional parameters that empower report consumers.
- These features help meet your reporting needs with fewer reports, reducing report proliferation and lower total cost of ownership.

Superior Report Designer

- The Crystal Reports 2008 report designer tool allows you to edit the report *with data*, so you don't have to switch between report design and preview mode – saving time in the report design cycle.
- Formula workshop helps report designers to add conditional logic to their reports.
- The graphical database expert tool allows drag-and-drop table joins – without writing any SQL.
- Meet the formatting and readability needs of report consumers by easily creating professional-looking reports.
- The report designer has complete control over all aspects of a reports appearance throughout the design cycle via conditional logic embedded in the report, or the comprehensive .NET application programming interface (API).

Support for Adobe Flash and Adobe Flex

- Bring Flash to your .NET applications by embedding Adobe Flash files directly into a Crystal report.
- Crystal Reports 2008 supports Adobe Flash and Flex integration, enabling powerful visualizations using industry-standard tools.
- Operational reporting workflows support report integration with back-office Web services, via embedded Adobe Flex models.
- Embed powerful what-if scenarios directly in the report using Xcelsius®-based Flash models.

Financial Reporting

- Powerful new crosstab features enable rapid financial report creation.
- You only need one reporting tool with Crystal Reports 2008. There's no need for a specialized financial reporting tool.

REPORTING PORTAL USING CRYSTAL REPORTS SERVER 2008

You need to secure and distribute reports over the web and in Microsoft Office. The solution is Crystal Reports Server 2008.

ADVANTAGES OF CRYSTAL REPORTS SERVER 2008

Flexible Access to Compelling Information

Reduce reliance on your IT department by enabling end users to easily access information when and where they want. Crystal reports can be consumed on the Web, in documents sent via email, while disconnected from a network, and embedded in Microsoft Word, Excel, or PowerPoint documents.

Report consumers can:

- **Find answers to their business questions quicker** by getting to the information they need with on-report interactive parameters and sorting – online or offline
- **Make fact-based decisions** by modeling the potential outcome of their decisions with what-if scenarios embedded in reports
- **Act faster** with operational reports that communicate with back-office systems
- **Deliver more compelling presentations** by embedding reports that include interactive charts and graphs, or dynamic video files

No Development Required

All the new features of Crystal Reports 2008 are now available without requiring any application development.

Crystal Reports Server 2008 enables your Crystal reports by adding:

- **Web-based report viewing** with full support for all major browsers – Internet Explorer, Safari, and Firefox
- **Scheduling** for automated distribution of reports
- **Security** of both reports and the data within the reports to ensure users only see what they're entitled to
- **Web-based report administration**
- **Integration with Microsoft Office** using BusinessObjects™ Live Office

Offline Report Viewing

- Unlike other reporting tools, the free Crystal Reports Viewer can be used for interactive report viewing with saved data, even when you're disconnected from your server.
- When used to view reports hosted on Crystal Reports Server, the Crystal Reports Viewer can refresh data within the report.

Support IT Best Practices

- Crystal Reports Server 2008 encourages the separation report processing from database processing, maximizing both database and report scalability and performance.

ADVANTAGES OF THE CRYSTAL REPORTS ECOSYSTEM

Whether you need to add reporting to a .NET application or to your SQL Server database, Crystal Reports is a superior choice to Microsoft Reporting Services.

Experience

- Crystal Reports has been uniquely focused on reporting for over 15 years.

Independence

- Crystal Reports complements typical IT environments, and is not used as a means to sell more database software.
- Crystal Reports is built to work with technologies and databases from multiple vendors including, but not limited to, Microsoft.

Partners

- With hundreds of partners providing add-on products and services to Crystal Reports, you can find a solution to your problem in our comprehensive Crystal Reports ecosystem of products.

People

- 15 years of reporting experience has created a thriving ecosystem of independent consultants and IT professionals with Crystal Reports skills.

CONCLUSION

Crystal Reports delivers both a reporting tool *and* a complete solution that is superior to Microsoft Reporting Services. Crystal Reports from Business Objects is:

- More powerful
- More complete
- A more comprehensive ecosystem of partners and products

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