



# BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE



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Editor: Vanessa Warden

## Unpublished Secrets...Undocumented Features...Timesaving Solutions

### The Quest for Intelligence in Business: A Fractured Fairy Tale

*Editor's Note: Grant Sutton is the author of this delightful overview of Business Intelligence. Grant has over seven years of intensive Business Intelligence and Data Warehousing experience, and has consulted with J.D. Edwards™ on the design of their Business Intelligence solution. Grant is an independent consultant specializing in BI and Strategic Information Planning. Grant's email is: Grant\_Sutton@msn.com.*

#### The Quest

#### That was then...

Long ago, as some of you with streaks of silver in your hair may remember, many wizards toiled for years to create magical systems that would capture the data that had theretofore resided on paper. "Behold!" they cried, "We have cre-

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### What's New At JDETips

First, we'd like to introduce the new editor of JDETips, Vanessa Warden. Vanessa has been working behind the scenes on JDETips for several months, sharpening up the wording, coordinating the contribution of articles, and applying her marketing and training development savvy to many aspects of JDETips.

**Focus 2001** was a big success for JDETips. Nearly 400 of you stopped by our booth. Three lucky individuals won 10 reader subscriptions for their companies. We now have nearly **100 companies subscribing, and 1500 readers.** Click here to find out which companies are subscribing.

We'd like to thank all of our loyal subscribers for helping us have a great first year. **Go to the homepage and look for the Subscriber section in the lower right corner for a free gift from JDETips to you.**

**Advanced Pricing Mastery Workshops are coming in October, November and December.** If you are thirsting for practical, advanced tips on this powerful module, then this Workshop is for you. Sessions are held in a beautiful setting in the mountains of Western Colorado. Go to the homepage and click on the Workshops button for more information. Note that the JDE course on Advanced Pricing is a pre-requisite.

We'd like to welcome three new corporate sponsors to JDETips. They join our first sponsor, **Create!form International:**

- Vanguard Solutions
- International Presence
- Whitehouse Consultants

We hope you will click on the links above and visit their websites.

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### JDE Honors Program Seeks Internships

*JDETips is proud to partner with the JDE Honors Program at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. We recently met with Gordie Karels, the interim director, about the program's need for industry-based internships for their students.*

J.D. Edwards president and chairman, C. Edward McVaney, and his wife Carole donated \$32.2 million dollars in 1998 to create this unique program in Computer Science and Management at their alma mater. "My personal interest in computer science and information sciences was originally triggered in UNL's classrooms," he said. "Now, I want to create the atmosphere for the best computer science program in the world."

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ated dungeons for your data! You need never worry about lost ledgers, or mystifying handwriting, again!" True to their word, these mighty electronic wizards locked away much of the information in the corporate data dungeon to the cheers of the crowds.

At some point, after the celebratory shredding of the carbon paper, recycling of giant ledger sheets, and when requests for a "few minor changes" from the boss merely gave people a nervous tick (as opposed to full-fledged convulsions) the king requested an audience with the wizards. "I want a report on the state of my kingdom" said the king. "Give me the key to the data dungeon, that I may see my data and make my report to the shareholders."

The wizards gasped, for the king was not a member of the sacred order of the pocket protector and hence not versed in the magical arts. Thinking quickly they replied, "Oh mighty king, such work is beneath you. Our assistant wizards will be at your beck and call. You need merely to make a request for information to them and they will provide the answer to a request on pristine paper within sixteen weeks, possibly longer. You will not need to dirty your royal hands in the data dungeons."

Certain that he had misheard the timeframe for delivery, the king agreed. And so it went for many years. The wizards and assistant wizards were the keepers of the keys for the data dungeon. Over the years, the wizards built new dungeons—most not connected to the others, each requiring their own keys. There were reports created against each dungeon, so that the king, queen, dukes, and barons could get their information. Occasionally, the king or the royal court would ask if there weren't a better way, or why they got different answers from different data dungeons. When this would happen, the wizards would chant incantations (in techno-Babylon) that would make a thick fog cover the king's mind, until he would ask no more.

### ***This is now...***

Now your queen (how times have changed) is not satisfied with the ways of the old kings. She summons you and your fellow wizards to the great hall. She holds up three reports all showing different sales figures for the same quarter, and slams them on the table:

"This cannot continue. We need more powerful magic that will provide us a single version of the truth. We must have accurate, complete information about the pulse of this kingdom, and we need it in a timely manner! As much as we honor and respect your wizardry, we do not want to go to you each time we need new information, or when we need to look at data in a different way. We need to spend time *analyzing* and *using* information – not *gathering* it."

You try the ancient incantations, but no fog will cover her mind (must be the all-natural energy shakes she drinks for lunch). She points out how some people in the neighboring kingdoms have what she's requesting, and if you can't provide it, perhaps you'll find yourself in a dungeon.

Your quest is to give the queen what she needs—Business Intelligence (BI). To do this, you will need to become a valiant knight as well as a wizard. We will illuminate for you the dragons that need to be slain, the failed attempts from the past (dragon chow), the conquering knight and his weapons.

## **The DRAGONS**

There are several dragons that can be slain with a well-architected and executed BI solution. If you recognize several of these dragons in your kingdom, a BI solution may keep you out of the dungeon.



- Multiple versions of the truth (the answer depends on which system you query)
- Backlog of report requests in IT
- Poor data quality
- Reports are not timely
- Significant time & effort spent creating reports by hand (in Excel, Access, etc.)
- Many, many standalone desktop databases and spreadsheets
- Little time remaining for actual analysis of data gathered
- Roughly 793 reports are run every month, but no one knows which ones are actually being used
- Dependence of business users on IT for reporting & analysis
- Reports can only pull data from a single application
- Can't get a 360-degree view of customer due to stovepipe systems
- Diverse skill sets and staff needed to handle reporting & analysis requirements
- Many different user interfaces for different end-user reporting tools
- Lack of agreement (and sometimes raging battles) on business metrics (e.g. what counts as a "sale" for the month)
- No customer master file across all systems (not just ERP)
- No product master file across all systems (not just ERP)
- No way to easily report changes over time
- No way to reliably forecast, based on historical patterns

## This Article Continues...

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