

WHAT IS REPORTING?

The Answer Might Surprise You.

When we think of enterprise reports, we generally think of inventory reports, product usage reports, distribution reports, or maybe financial reports. Sure, reports are important tools that help us understand how our company is performing, and they provide us with the critical information we need to make decisions. But they are also limited in scope and maybe a little boring. Right? Not so fast!

For medium-sized companies and large enterprises, these reports typically are generated through reporting software. Reporting software takes data stored on the company server and formats it in such a way that we can easily grasp the huge amounts of information contained in our databases. At its core, a report is simply a representation of that data.

Until now, most businesses have stuck to that traditional way of thinking when using reporting software. But what reporting software really boils down to is an application that pulls data from a repository and displays it in some meaningful way. Considering this, it soon becomes clear that we could expand this definition to encompass a much broader category of "reports." Embracing this wider definition of reports offers companies much needed assistance with all kinds of other things, that are actually reports.

Ironically, throwing more things into the category called "reports" will actually offer a company more freedom in its enterprise; they can now represent their data—more kinds of data—with greater ease.

Got Data? Then you need reporting – one way or another!

At first glance, most of us wouldn't think of this letter as



2212 West Palmer, Suite 11R
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www.intersectmedia.com

April 17, 2006

Dear John Smith:

This letter serves to confirm our offer of employment at Intersect Media as Senior Software Developer, effective April 22, 2006. As we discussed during your interview, your job duties will include:

- Architecting Software
- Designing Programs
- Coding
- Testing Units Company-wide
- Managing Development Team
- Reporting updates to Management and Board of Directors

You will receive an annual salary of \$120,000 paid out bi-weekly and subject to a 5% bonus at year end. In addition, Intersect Media Group offers several benefit plans in which you will be eligible to participate under the terms and conditions of those plans. Please complete and return the enclosed 6 forms, as well as a signed copy of this letter (attached) to confirm your acceptance of this offer.

You are an at-will employee; therefore you and Intersect Media Group have the right to terminate your employment for any reason at any time. The terms of this offer are confidential.

If you have any questions concerning the terms set forth above or any of the related issues, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We look forward to having you on our team! Please direct any questions about your start date and to your supervisor, Emily Johnson, VP of Software Development Services, in our Chicago headquarters.

Sincerely,

Jane Olsen
Manger, Human Resources Department

Toll Free: 888-866-8512 • fax: 773-489-7221 • email: intersectmedia@usa.com

Letters, such as the Offer of Employment above are a great way to utilize reporting to increase efficiency and accuracy. Using a reporting tool also improves security of the data, because it decreases the personnel touch points necessary. With Windward Reports, what was an iterative process, becomes linear. Report users design and submit their own templates. Once installed, the Windward Report is generated en mass at the touch of a button.

a report. But delve into it a bit deeper, and we can see the similarities.

For starters, the letter template mirrors a typical report template. It carries a standard format with default text

and places for holding data (the date, employee's name, salary, terms, etc.) Create 200 offer letters, and they will all look the same with the exception of the individual personal data and offer details.

And, since that relevant data is stored in the company's database, all the manager needs to do is run the "report" for the appropriate individuals, and the data is automatically inserted into the "report template" (the letter). Rather than typing the individual "Offer of Employment" letters out in a word processing program, even with a large amount of "cut and paste," smart HR departments are realizing that they can simply create one letter template in Microsoft Word, tag the relevant data and have hundreds or thousands of offer letters generated more accurately and more efficiently than they ever imagined.

This is just one of the ways in which Windward customers are taking the notion of reporting to a new level. Windward Reports' primary benefit is that it is both quick and simple to design report templates. The customizable report templates' layout, font and formatting are designed with Microsoft Word or any other word processing program. Windward's AutoTag plug-in allows the user to access data in either SQL or Xpath to place in the report template.

In this example, the end user (a corporate manager) easily created the letter in Microsoft Word and handed the letter off to the IT department. The IT folks added the database tags and placed an icon on the end user's workstation allowing the end user to run the report. The manager selects the function to run a report, and within seconds the Windward Reports reporting software returns the letter complete with all the necessary data. The output doesn't have to be a Word document, either. It can be in



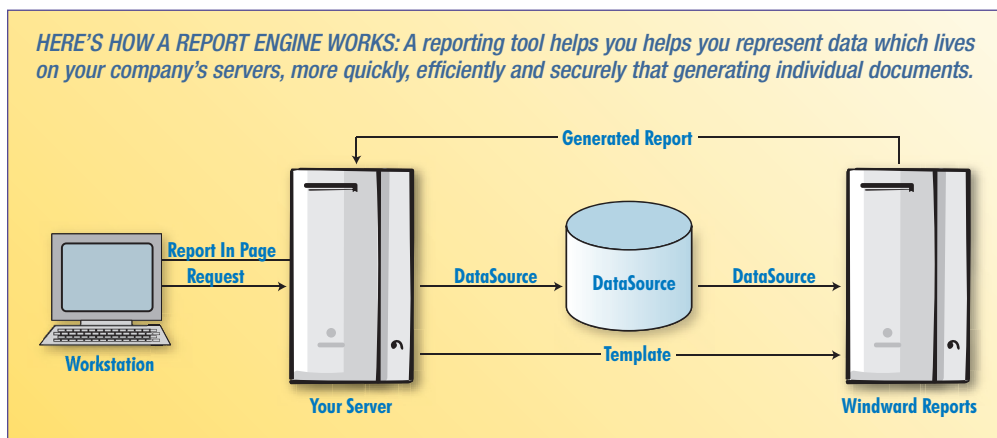
For a Government or educational Agency, keeping track of certain facts & statistics is as important as generating proof of those facts. For a State Alcohol Licensing Board, using a reporting tool can automate everything from applications to sell liquor to License expiration reports, to the certificates issued.

PDF, RTE, HTML, WordML, SpreadsheetML, XLS, text or multi-part MIME email format.

One of Windward's customers, a systems integrator, is using Windward Reports to in this non-traditional way. The customer's client, a federal government agency, generates letters for victims of federal crimes to update them on the status of restitution and other aspects of their case. The "letter generator" had to include XML data, and the letters include different sections of text, in varying sizes depending on the circumstances of the case. Today, these letters are generated into PDF using Windward Reports.

Letters are far from the only non-traditional use of reporting software by Windward Studios customers. Consider the following sample certificate:

A state licensing agency (which could not be named because of governmental policy) currently is using the Windward Reports software to create certificates similar to those in the above example. The agency is one of the largest reporting agencies in the state,



with more than 280 locations and 3,000 employees. Its Records Management division uses Windward Reports to generate liquor licenses statewide. Who knew that liquor license certificates were actually reports?

In both of these two examples, the similarities are clear, even though certificates and letters are two different types of "reports." Each example involves creating a template, calling upon data to insert in the template, and displaying the final output.

Still, given these two sample reports, it may not be immediately obvious how far we can extend our definition of reporting. A third one, though, hints at greater possibilities.

Yes, these business cards are reports too. How? They

arating the cards. And not only did this company save money, it also was assured of the integrity of the data. In fact, the very same data used to populate a new employee's offer letter in the first example, can be pulled in to create their new business card once the offer is accepted.

That's another key benefit of using reporting software to create non-traditional reports such as business cards, letters, certificates, insurance quotes, timesheets, proof of coverage and more. Because the reporting software is relying on one source of information -- your database -- you are assured of consistent data company-wide.

With a broader definition of reporting in mind, it's clear that not only can reporting software help us understand how our company is performing and provide us with the information we need to make decisions, it can help us better represent that information both internally and externally.

About Windward Reports:

Windward Reports is the only comprehensive report generator to use Microsoft Word as a layout tool, thus cutting the learning curve to virtually nil while saving time and money for both technical and non-technical users alike. Windward Reports Server Engine 4.1 is available for both Java and .Net environments. Purchased with a Windward Autotag components, the Windward Reports tool empowers the user to access their data in reports easily without the assistance of a developer or programmer on the system is installed.

Windward Studios has been in business since 1995. Based in Boulder, Colorado, the company was formed to develop innovative software products for both enterprise and individual customers.



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Think You Don't use Reporting? You might and not know it. Highly graphic documents like business cards, certificates and insurance cards can be automatically generated when a report tool extracts relevant data directly and accurately from your server.

have a template, they can be populated with data from a large database, and they're generated with Windward Reports. But what may be less obvious is why a company might use reporting software in this way.

In this case, the company in question found that it was much more affordable to create business cards via reporting software than to contract it out or create cards internally in another way. They simply purchased some serrated paper, designed the layout they wanted, ran the business card "report" and had interns complete the process by sep-