



# Top 10 Trends in Business Intelligence for 2012

The last few years have seen sea changes in business intelligence (BI) as the proliferation of data and advances in technologies push the pace of innovation. What will 2012 bring? Here are 10 trends to watch for in the months ahead.

## 1 Big data gets even bigger

One of the overarching trends in BI today is that data is growing, growing, growing. What we expect to see in 2012 is more organizations actually using that data, rather than just collecting and storing it. This will put pressure on vendors to deliver solutions that can really work with big data, especially in an ad-hoc way, such as in-memory analytics and general performance improvements.

## 2 Self-reliance is the new self-service

The idea of self-service BI where IT opens up a small menu of capabilities for employees is over. Giving employees an environment where they can get the data they need to answer questions on their own schedules will become the norm. The consumerization of enterprise software is part of the story here, but the real driver is the increasing pace of business across industries. Business users are coming to expect that they can modify and create reports as needed. When they can't, their frustration with existing tools will lead to change in their organizations.

## 3 The pace toward the “Consumerization of Enterprise Software” accelerates

You've already heard it: consumer software is faster, easier, and often more sophisticated than enterprise software. Why? Consumer software typically puts more thought into design. And software that's well-designed with fewer features is more useful than poorly-designed software that is packed with options. People want their business software to work as easily and as smoothly as their personal software – to the point where they use personal software to accomplish business objectives. This trend is going to speed up and IT needs to be ready. Traditional enterprise software deployments beware.

## 4 Mobile adoption goes mainstream

*Apple claims* that 92% of the Fortune 500 will be testing or deploying iPads in the 2012 timeframe. Companies are moving from the experimentation stage with mobile into real, IT-supported deployments. And the tablet finally offers a form factor that makes sense for BI. Expect to be a laggard if you're not using mobile for BI by the end of 2012.

## 5 Companies get (a little more) comfortable with social

Alerting has been around forever, long enough to clog our inboxes with too many alert emails. Social platforms like Salesforce's Chatter offer the promise of disseminating information in a more consumable, useful way. We see social BI as a nascent trend in 2012. It will take several years before most organizations are willing to change their patterns of communication to support more grassroots, interconnected communication.

## 6 Companies explore the cloud

Lower TCO, easier setup—these factors will drive some companies to the cloud for business intelligence. In 2012 we see adopters primarily in small- and medium-sized businesses that don't have a lot of IT resources. BI cloud offerings will also get more diverse and more mature.

## 7 Analytical talent will become a required part of many jobs...leading to talent shortages

The McKinsey Global Institute released a [study](#) in 2011 predicting that by 2018, the US would face a shortage of up to “1.5 million managers and analysts with the know-how to use the analysis of big data to make effective decisions.” In 2012, despite the soft job environment, we'll start to see tightness in the market for analytical skills and demand for tools to help make up the difference.

## 8 IT and business users continue to dance around “alignment”

Companies with enlightened IT staffs and business leaders who recognize the business impact of IT are achieving spectacular results from BI projects. In these organizations, IT no longer tries to squash business-driven BI projects, they're asking how they can support and improve them. These organizations will continue to see gains from their alignment efforts. But in less enlightened environments, BI still represents a battleground for control. And, unfortunately, IT just isn't in a position to win.

## 9 Interactive data visualization becomes a requirement

The wide variety of data visualized on the web will make business users expect that capability inside their organization as well. And with the trend of bigger data, interactive data visualization will become a critical tool in sifting through all that information. Reports filled with endless rows and columns of numbers or static, boring charts that take hours to sift through and weeks to change won't cut it anymore.

## 10 Hadoop gathers momentum – unstructured data isn't going anywhere

Hadoop is the best way to deal with massive amounts of data especially if it's unstructured. While still a nascent technology, vendors like Cloudera are pushing Hadoop forward. We don't see it becoming mainstream in 2012, but we do see it getting much closer.

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