

Self-Service Business Intelligence — Simplifying Data Discovery

Technology has simplified business intelligence for all business users. With user-friendly tools such as drag and drop reporting and visual data discovery, business leaders and frontline staff now have the power to create, personalize, interact with, monitor and share key business metrics—with minimal assistance from IT. IT still has a critical role to play in BI, but their focus has sharpened to infrastructure design and management rather than report creation and distribution. In the end, everybody wins.



What is Self-Serve BI?

Gartner Research Group defines self-service business intelligence (SS BI) as “end users defining and deploying their own reports and analyses within an approved and supported architecture and tools portfolio.”¹ Margaret Rouse, Editorial Director of TechTarget describes it as “an approach to data analytics that enables business users to access and work with corporate information without the IT department’s involvement (except, of course, to setup the data warehouse and data marts underpinning the business intelligence (BI) system and deploy the self-service query and reporting tools).”²

We define it as “enabling all users to create, consume and visualize their data, in a uniform single experience on one flexible platform.” Note that all three definitions make mention of IT and business users. Let’s take a quick look at the benefits of self-service BI for each group.

Self-Service Dundas BI™ – Simplified Data Discovery for all Business Users

Operations, Sales, Marketing and other business leaders all need tools to provide the insight needed to make decisions on how to spend their time and allocate resources. Technical barriers were preventing access to insight. To solve the problem, Dundas created a self-service BI solution for information producers and consumers that simplifies data discovery, supports on-the-fly data analysis in any format, on any device, and displays stunning visualizations that can be grasped intuitively by users of all levels. Business users love it. Let’s look at the different user groups and how they interact with Dundas BI™.

- [Self-Service Data Presentation for Information Consumers](#)—Those who only want to view information can be granted rights to access dashboards, reports and scorecards relevant to them. They can also easily personalize views to answer their specific questions—by changing filter levels or adding new parameters such as location or timeframe, and selecting different visualization methods such as charts or graphs. Reports can be automatically pushed out to information consumers on a defined schedule, or they can receive alerts when defined thresholds are exceeded.
- [Self-Service Data Discovery for Business Users](#)—Non-technical department managers and project leaders want to create reports and conduct analysis themselves. Dundas’ uniform design and viewing experience allows them to drive their own data discovery by easily modifying pre-defined dashboards and re-using metric sets created by IT (or an Analyst). As an example of just how easy it is for business users to self-serve, they can easily create data mashups using drag and drop

and then turn those data mashups into sharable pixel perfect dashboard using an intuitive designer to support their required design and visualizations options. They can then add notes on top of data points to promote discussions and actions right from the dashboards.

- [Self-Service Data Analysis for Business Analysts](#)—Analysts are typically business users with an understanding of data structures and models, and some technical skills. They're responsible for collecting, organizing and interpreting data, and advising business leaders on the patterns and correlations uncovered within. With Dundas BI, Analysts don't need to be data experts, or understand Extraction, Transformation and Loading (ETL) models and query languages. The unified Dundas BI platform allows them to easily create the dashboards and metric sets for their department needs, by providing simplified exposure to the entire data set along with drag and drop capabilities. Tools like Dundas' data discovery engine automatically identifies natural and non-natural hierarchies (parent-child relationships), allowing Analysts to spend less time manipulating data and more time sharing insight with business leaders. Data analysts can also analyze data their own dataset by simply dragging an excel spreadsheet onto a dashboard canvas. They can then instantly see the flat list of columns and data points transformed into a graphic representation showing trends and patterns.

IT as Enablers

Today, IT plays a foundational role in creating and managing the information infrastructure that drives the delivery of insight. New technology like the Dundas BI™ (Business Intelligence) platform allows IT to spend less time, effort and budget on set up, and happily transfer querying to business users themselves.

Dundas BI is an enterprise-ready platform that makes analytics easy and cost effective for IT. As single system that behaves the same way across all data sources, the time and effort required for installation, integration, upgrades and backups is minimized. Simple user administration, accessed via a browser or tablet, makes multi-tenancy user profile management a breeze, while still supporting IT governance over the self-service environment via auditing and other security features.

Applying the 80/20 rule to self-service BI means that business users should be able to take care of most of their own analytic needs, with only twenty percent requiring support from IT. Using Dundas BI, IT, as well as savvy Business Analysts, can easily create a set of pre-defined enterprise level dashboards and reports that business users can quickly modify and combine metrics on the fly, drilling up and down, filtering across different regions, timeframe or whatever dimensions are important to them.

Now that non-technical personnel can use tools like Dundas BI dashboards and scorecards to answer their own data-related questions, IT can focus on higher value services such as improving data processing speed and bringing emerging technologies to the table.

The Dundas enterprise-ready BI platform provides tailored self-service business intelligence for all user types, and frees up IT to focus on higher value initiatives. Our end-to-end self-service approach extends beyond the solution to include self-learning resources including support and online training videos.

To find out how Dundas BI can deliver deeper insights, better decisions and achieve greater success, [request a live demo](#) or a [45-day free online trial](#). Learn more at www.dundas.com.

About Dundas

Dundas is a leading, global provider of Business Intelligence and Data Visualization solutions. For over 20 years, Dundas has been helping enterprise customers to discover insights faster, make better decisions and achieve greater efficiency.

www.dundas.com

1. Gartner IT Glossary, Gartner, Inc.
2. Rouse, M., (2012) "Self Service Business Intelligence." And "DIY BI: A guide to self-service business intelligence implementation." TechTarget