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An Oracle White Paper
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Reporting Tools in Oracle Fusion Financials

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Executive Overview

We are living in an 'Information Age', where the success of an organization depends largely on how effectively it collects, processes and - most importantly - uses strategic financial information.

As an organization grows, there is a corresponding increase in the amount of data handled by the system, and a wider number of users requiring access to this data through management reporting. The complexity of reporting and analysis also increases as users at all levels of the organization demand access to up-to-the-minute information to support business-critical decisions.

Historically, *reporting* and *information* have not always gone hand in hand: in particular reports that provide pages and pages of accounting data are not providing the type of timely, relevant information that underpin productivity and profitability.

Today's economic and regulatory climate places additional demands on the financial reporting function. External reporting to auditors, regulatory bodies and other third-party stakeholders needs to be accurate, complete and easy to produce, with minimal burdens on time, cost and efficiency within the finance department.

The value of a financial system can be measured by two main outcomes:

- Does it provide all the functionality needed to enable users to enter, process and manage transactions productively?

- Does it deliver meaningful analysis and flexible reporting to empower management to make better business decisions?

Introduction

Oracle Fusion Financials offers more than one reporting tool. While the choice may seem overwhelming at first, we have found that no single tool can best meet the different demands of every user in the organization. By providing multiple reporting options, each method delivers the best match for efficient and relevant reporting within a specific area; whether for management reports, financial analysis, transactional intelligence or statutory reporting.

This white paper provides an overview of each type of reporting and identifies the suggested uses for each of the reporting tools.
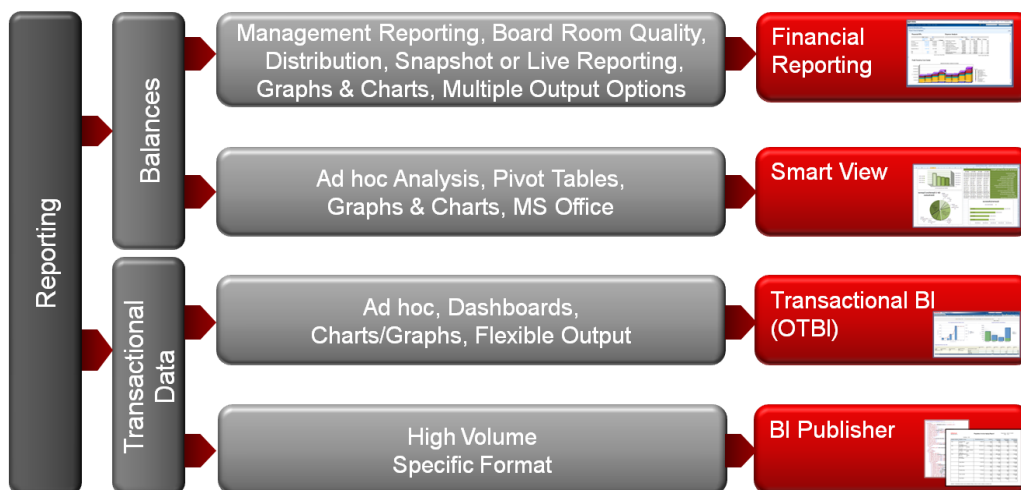
Figure 1: Reporting tools available with Oracle Fusion Financials

Financial Reporting Center

Financial Reporting Center delivers boardroom-quality management reports based on live general ledger balances and hierarchies. In addition to high quality, formatted reports including graphs and charts, Financial Reporting Center also supports detailed and interactive analysis within the report through slicing-and-dicing, expansions and drilldowns, allowing managers and executives to review strategic financial highlights and trends but with the added capability to investigate the details for a comprehensive understanding of financial performance.

The advantage of Fusion Financial Reporting is that it is based on real-time multi-dimensional account balances in the GL Essbase cube, so users can analyze information rapidly based on pre-aggregated summary balances at every level of the accounting hierarchy (ie the summary balances do not need to be calculated at report run-time). Every time a transaction or journal is posted, general ledger balances are created at every possible summarization level in real-time, so account balance inquiries and reporting are fast and up-to-the-minute accurate.

Financial Reporting comprises FR Studio for report definition, Workspace for report administration and distribution, and the Financial Report Center for immediate self-service user access to reports.

FR Studio supports powerful formulas and calculations, advanced formatting, embedded charts, multi-dimensional analysis, summary / detail expansions, drilldown and run-time points of view (reporting filters) to create production-quality, highly formatted reports.

There are no predefined sample reports in the Financial Reporting Center, as these reports are dependent on the account values and hierarchies that are unique to every business. However, FR Studio is an intuitive, graphical tool that makes it easy for users to create reports by dragging and dropping data elements from the accounting hierarchy onto a grid layout.
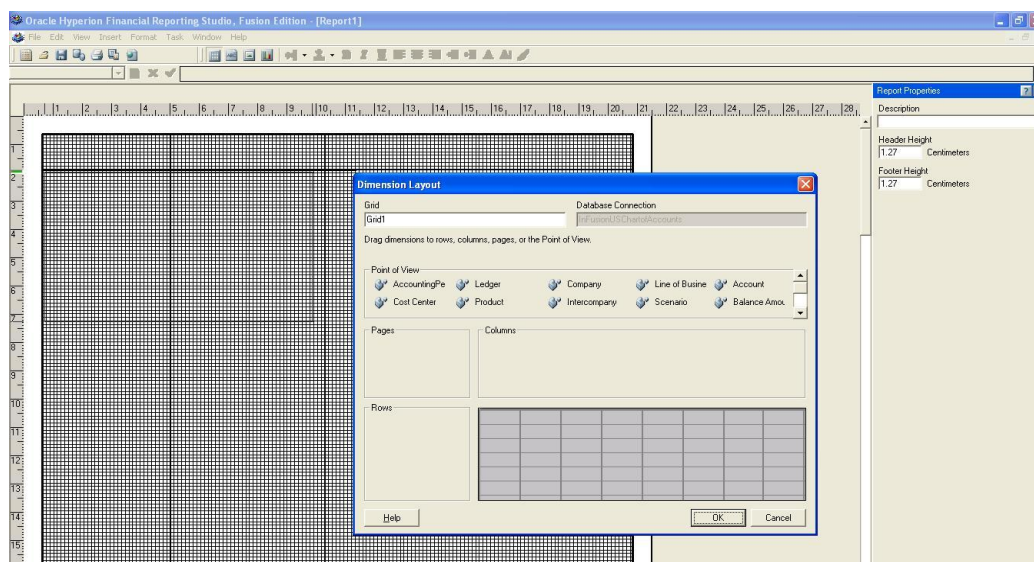

Figure 2: FR Studio report designer

Financial Reporting Center provides self-service user access to financial reports based on real-time multi-dimensional general ledger balances and hierarchies.

Workspace is a browser-based report repository and distribution tool for report administrators. Administrators can group and distribute reports using books, and schedule report batches with bursting capabilities (i.e. generate and email separate report outputs across multiple values of a single account segment).

The Financial Report Center provides immediate, self-service user access to financial reports online. Interactive reporting supports real-time expansions and drilldowns to underlying source transactions. Both live reports - based on real-time accounting data - and snapshots - at a fixed point in time - can be analyzed and viewed in multiple output formats, such as HTML, PDF, Excel and other MS Office products.
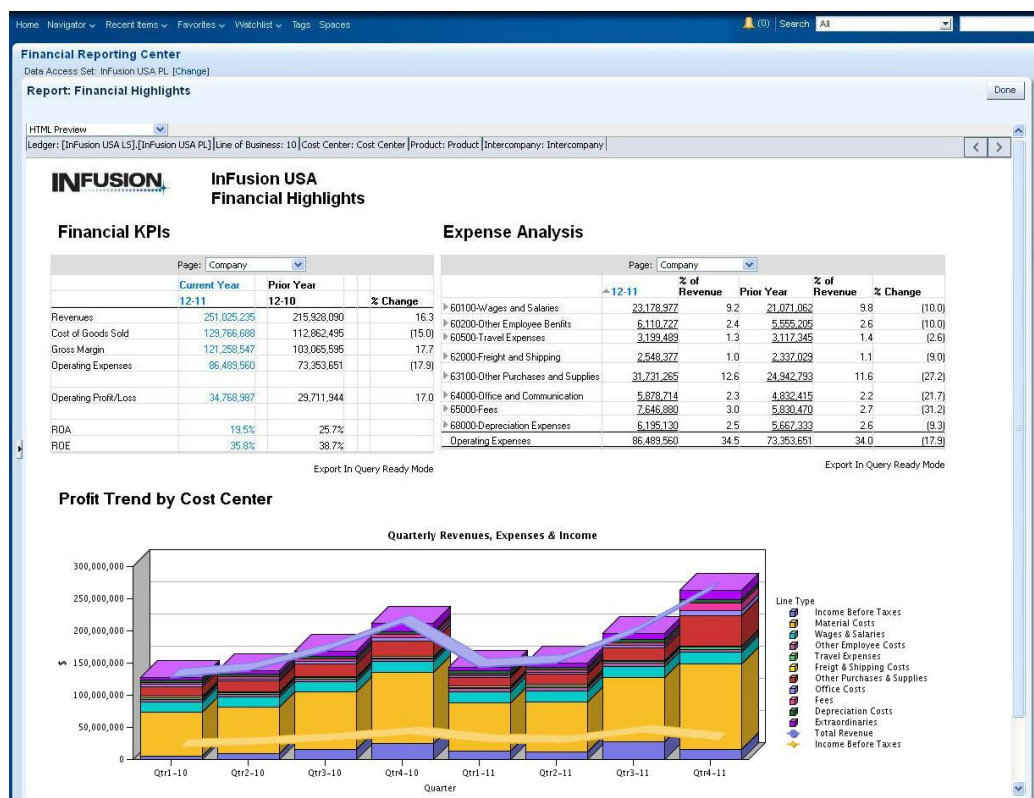
Figure 3: An example of a financial report in Financial Reporting Center

Smart View

Smart View is an Excel-based analysis tool, ideal for financial analysts needing to quickly define financial reports and ad hoc queries within a familiar tool. Unlike traditional offline spreadsheet analysis, Smart View is directly integrated to Fusion General Ledger balances in real-time.

Pivoting, drag-and-drop and drilldown can be used to manipulate data and perform ad-hoc analysis against real-time multi-dimensional account balances. Users can either build queries from scratch or export the contents of a financial report to Excel for further analysis. Reports and queries can be saved offline, then automatically updated with the latest real-time GL data by re-opening the spreadsheet.

Although our suggested use case places Smart View as an Excel add-in, Smart View reports and queries can also be enabled in Powerpoint and Word, allowing real-time financial analysis to be embedded into management reporting packs so that the information used to drive decision-making is always accurate and up-to-date.
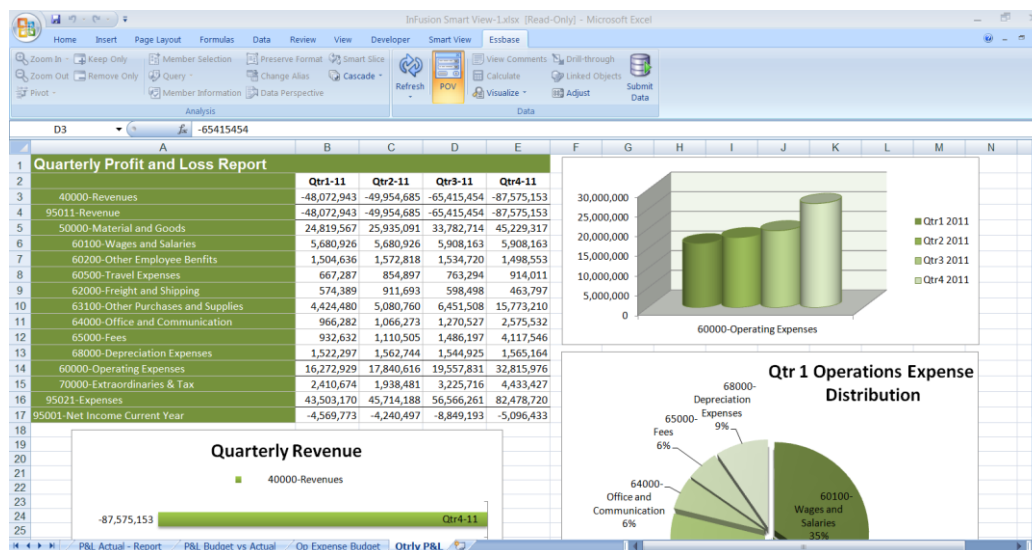
Figure 4: Smart View analysis in Excel

Oracle Transactional Business Intelligence

OTBI provides real-time self-service reporting on top of transaction data, where business users can create their own reports using prepackaged content.

Oracle Transactional Business Intelligence (OTBI) is designed for operational users who want to create their own custom queries, reports, dashboards, charts and graphs to aid daily decision-making. Users can access, analyze and evaluate real-time transaction data in Fusion Financials by using a self-service report design tool to build reports on top of customizable analysis structures. As an end-user tool, OTBI reduces reliance on IT for the creation and maintenance of reports, and provides the business with a fast, effective way to answer critical operational business questions.

OTBI provides pre-packaged content covering the major processes and transaction attributes, plus prebuilt financial reporting metrics. Business users create ad-hoc reports based on this metadata layer, in order to produce tactical reporting on real-time operational data. Reports can include powerful analysis features such as drilldowns, calculations and charts. Report layouts can be saved to the BI Catalog for re-use and the output can be viewed directly within Fusion Financials, or downloaded to Excel.

Sample reports, such as Discounts Taken and Lost Report and Sales Journal by Customer Report, are shipped with Fusion Financials for reference. OTBI comes with a large number of transactional attributes available for analysis, including predefined subject areas and prebuilt metrics available for financial reporting. Fusion Financials contains the following transactional BI subject areas:

PAYABLES	RECEIVABLES	FIXED ASSETS	GENERAL LEDGER
Invoices Holds	Adjustments	Asset Assignments	Journals
Invoices Installments	Credit Memo Applications	Asset Balances	Period Statuses
Invoices Prepayments	Credit Memo Requests	Asset Depreciation	Transactional Balances
Invoices Transactions	Disputes	Asset Retirements	Intercompany Transactions
Invoices Trial Balance	Miscellaneous Receipts	Asset Source Lines	Subledger Accounting Journals
Invoices Withholding	Payment Schedules	Asset Transactions	Subledger Accounting Supporting References
Payments Payment History	Receipt Conversion	Asset Transfers	
Payments Disbursements	Receipt History		CASH MANAGEMENT
	Revenue Adjustments		Bank Statement Balances
	Standard Receipts		Bank Statement Line Charges
	Transactions		Bank Statements
			External Cash Transactions

BI Publisher

BI Publisher is used to author, manage, and deliver all types of highly formatted documents based on transactional data.

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BI Publisher is ideal for high volume, highly-formatted transaction-based reports providing details of current operational data.

BI Publisher can be used to produce reports such as invoices, shipping labels, government forms, EFT and EDI files, checks, operational reports and correspondence. BI Publisher is already used to deliver pre-packaged reports in Fusion Financials such as payment formats, tax reports and other fixed format, high volume documents. This makes it easy to customize and extend the reporting content already available to suit specific business requirements.

End users can easily create report layouts using the BI Publisher Layout Editor directly in a Web browser or with familiar desktop tools such as Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel.

On-demand as well as scheduled reports are supported, in a variety of output formats such as HTML, PDF, Word, XML and machine-readable files such as EFT and EDI. High volumes of reports can be delivered to multiple destinations like printers, e-mail, fax, WebDAV, or FTP with minimal impact to transactional systems. A single report can be burst with personalized content to multiple output formats and destinations on a scheduled basis.

Figure 5: Sample BI Publisher output

Conclusion

Users have different expectations from their financial reporting and analysis – the one thing they have in common is that they all need relevant, timely information to help the business be more productive and profitable. The reporting tools available within Oracle Fusion Financials are designed to offer the best match for any reporting requirements: whether they are transaction-based or balance-based financial reports, whether they are ad-hoc inquiries or fixed-format documents, whether they are high-level strategic indicators or focused analysis into operational details.

In addition to the reporting methods outlined in this document, embedded analytics are pervasive throughout Oracle Fusion Financials, delivering targeted operational insight within the context of transactions. These analytics are based on the same BI Foundation as BI Publisher and OTBI, and support timely and accurate decision-making with the opportunity to take immediate action. Exception-based reporting, such as transaction status alerts and account balance monitoring, are also pushed to users through role-based dashboards.

This white paper has considered the "traditional" reporting methods available in Oracle Fusion Financials, but it is important to note that Oracle Fusion has information at its heart, not only through the choice of reporting methods outlined here but also through business intelligence built-in into the infrastructure of the applications. Oracle Fusion Financials provides users at all levels of the organization access to relevant, up-to-the-minute information to support business-critical decisions.

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