

Is a Business Intelligence Course such a Smart Move?

Christo Potgieter

School of IT, Wintec

christo.potgieter@wintec.ac.nz

Vida Botes

School of Business, Wintec

vida.botes@wintec.ac.nz

Abstract

We explored Business Intelligence courses following informal enquiries from industry. An excellent survey in America provided useful insights for our consideration regarding local conditions. Problems with technology and poor data sets should ring warning bells for New Zealand. Also, special accommodation for our many SME's and extensive use of PC's, would be advisable.

Keywords: Business Intelligence, Data Mining, Data Warehousing, Knowledge Management

1 Observations

Respondents were from 77 tertiary institutions ("85 Schools") - over 90% universities and over 90% American. Courses were mostly taught by MIS discipline (figure 1), have been in graduate environment for more than one year (figure 2), are covered under large range of course names (figure 3), experience most challenges relate to technology (figure 4) and use a large range of software (figure 5).

Most mentioned technology challenges were 39 comments re Technology, with Software (Affordable and Reliable) and Datasets (Real-world), both at 16 mentions. Regarding Pedagogy respondents mentioned "Finding a suitable textbook" (6), "Realistic, meaningful, hands-on experiences" (7), "Meaningful cases" (4) and 6 others.

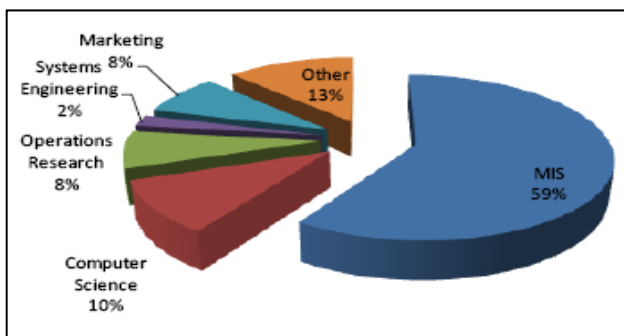


Figure 1: Disciplines teaching BI

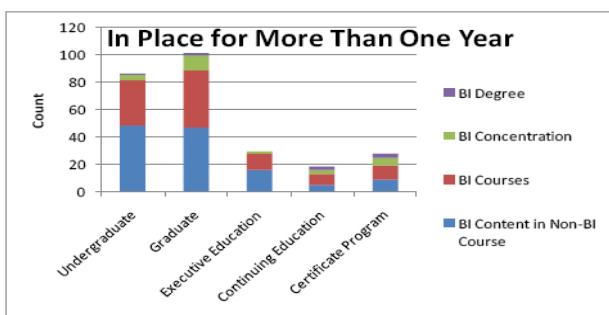


Figure 2: Period of existence

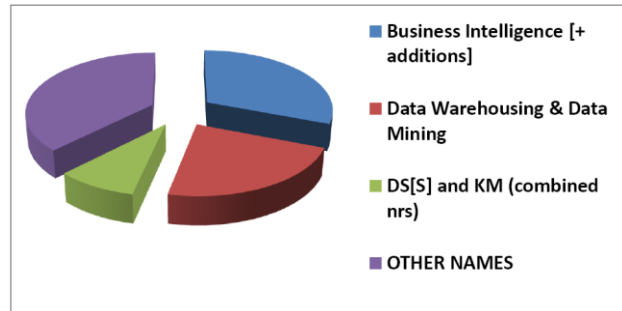


Figure 3: Range of course names

Microsoft, typical enterprises and "Other" specialist software each comprises about one third of the software mentioned.

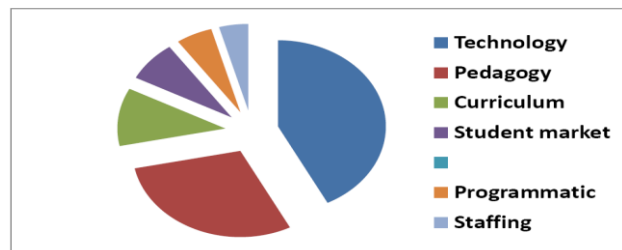


Figure 4: Challenges most mentioned

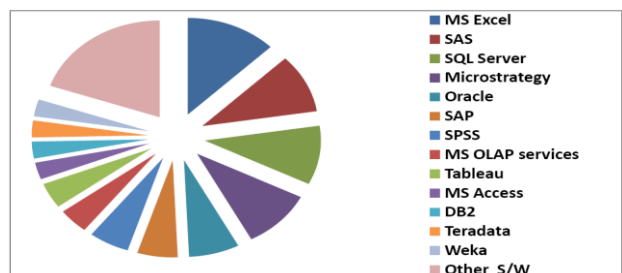


Figure 5: Range of software mentioned

2 Other interesting comments:

- Opportunity for inter-departmental linkages
- Should go beyond business reporting into advanced modelling [and] knowledge discovery
- Cover traditional cubes, tables and reports as well as more recently emerging multiple types of data, more real-time and more predictive analysis
- Sometimes taught by Accounting department – hence the emerging course title "Business Analytics"?

3 References

The State of Business Intelligence in Academia. (2009). Terada University Network