

Bath Spa University

Qlikview - A new kind of business intelligence

Development, deployment and informed decision making in days

“Speed of development and deployment have been the key success criteria in the implementation and deployment of Qlikview at Bath Spa University”

The University

Bath Spa University is a teaching-led university which offers pre-degree study, undergraduate degrees and postgraduate degrees in a wide range of programmes. In each of the University's schools of study there are programmes with outstanding results in sector-wide quality assurance processes.

Originally opened as a Teacher Training College in 1945, with full university status being granted in 2005, Bath Spa University now has approximately 6,000 students.

The Challenges

University staff were dependent on the interpretation of static reports with no mechanism for interactive analysis. Historically, analysis was carried out by a few individuals – only those with the relevant skills to pull apart the static reports or handle the raw data required to produce in depth analysis.

There was also no effective platform to empower users with a standardized analysis tool. Without a single shared data receptacle managers were at risk of misinterpreting data when querying operational systems.

“Qlikview applications empower our users to query data themselves, instead of relying on static reports being delivered.”



The Solution – Simplicity

Following a review of business intelligence and reporting systems by Jon Sebright, Head of Information Services and Chris Stedham, Business Intelligence Systems Manager a requirement for an easy-to-access information system was identified. Both Jon and Chris had many years of technical experience, as well as high levels of data management and reporting expertise. The system would be required to provide useful information from core University systems, where users would be empowered to query data themselves, instead of receiving static reports. Data from different core systems could be pre-loaded into a single shared application, which would restrict misinterpretation of data where users had previously queried operational systems directly.

Jon and Chris met with several BI vendors before deciding to implement Qlikview. Chris says “We were often asked for a sample of our data and the vendor would promise to return in 2 weeks with a working prototype, so it was Qlikview's ability to develop and deploy applications in hours or days, with no base requirement to use data warehouses which impressed.

The “lightbulb” moment came when BME Solutions and QlikView ran a “seeing is believing” workshop at Bath Spa University using our data. We produced much of the information we wanted to give to members of staff in about 7 hours, this gave us the QlikView bug and we were hooked”.

The Benefits

Chris attests, “QlikView has opened up our institutional data for analysis to a wider audience. QlikView is being used to deliver data and provide analysis to people that would ordinarily receive this information in static reports – or those that would have never received it at all.

QlikView offers a visibility to data that no other product seems to manage. The associative data engine is perfect for identifying data quality issues and enables us to fix them very quickly.

QlikView was the best value for money solution which required 3 days consultancy, to get things up and running and for us to develop a large range of analysis models in the QlikView environment.

We had the bare bones of our first QlikView application on the “seeing is believing day”. It only took a few weeks (including all the learning we needed to do) to progress this to an application that people could use and find interesting.”

Chris also liked the rapid development ability of Qlikview. He says “a great thing about QlikView is that we can quickly bring data together in a prototype. If the idea is worth pursuing, we act accordingly. If not, we've spent a few hours on it, not days getting the data into system before we can then start to create the application, which is the feeling we got with tools from other business intelligence vendors.”



The Applications

Qlikview applications have been developed across many key areas of the University, including:

- Student applications
- Student registrations
- Analysis of HESA and HESES returns
- Finance reporting
- Graduate Destinations
- Student to Staff Ratio analysis
- Human Resources KPIs
- Analysis Assets and Inventory
- Analysis of Questionnaire data from SNAP Surveys
- Analysis of accommodation bookings
- Analysis of the Active Directory IT function

Qlikview applications can be developed and rolled out to the user community in hours, so it's not surprising that Chris is finding new applications for Qlikview on an ongoing basis.

Empowering users

Qlikview has improved our decision makers' business efficiency by providing them with an easy to use analysis tool. BSU have changed from an environment of providing reports, to providing people with an easily-navigable Qlikview information environment used to make informed decisions.

QlikView didn't just answer the University's standard questions, it allowed people to ask questions they hadn't thought to ask before - and it's changing the way they work. As a result of working with QlikView, Bath Spa University staff are more knowledgeable. "We now have more informed decision makers and we are asking them to take responsibility for owning and understanding the data," says Chris.

"Qlikview developers required only 3 days external consultancy to develop applications for deployment to end-users."

"Qlikview has allowed us to deploy a common BI platform, where a single-version-of-the-truth can be shared and accessed communally via a web browser. It was easy to combine different data sources from SITS, Coda-Dream, ResourceLink, SQL Server, Microsoft Excel and text files in an information-rich decision-making environment that could reach all levels in the organization".

Collaboration

Bath Spa University have also hosted the last two Qlikview UK Higher Education User days, which are run every six months. This is an excellent forum where HE Qlikview users can share information, ideas and applications.

BME Solutions, a Qlikview partner that specializes in the Higher Education sector, introduced Qlikview to the University. BME have assisted BSU with Qlikview implementation and support services.

The future

Based on the success of Qlikview and the ability to develop and deploy applications so quickly, the University is looking to develop additional applications and increase the user base. Qlikview has been adopted as the University's reporting tool of the future.



SOLUTION SUMMARY

Industry:
Higher Education

Geography:
United Kingdom

Challenges:

- Provide an analysis tool to unlock the information held in operational systems
- Empowered to query data themselves, instead of relying on static reports
- Provides an accurate repository of data – single version of the truth
- The ability to combine disparate data sources in one application

Data Source Systems:

- SITS Vision
- Coda-Dream
- ResourceLink HR
- SQL Server 2000, 2005, 2008
- Spreadsheets
- Text files (CSV, Tab, XML, prn)
- Market research data

Solution

- First Qlikview model developed in 7 hours
- Qlikview 64-bit Server AJAX applications deployed to user community in web browser
- Intuitive dashboard-style analysis tool which users can query by using nothing but mouse clicks
- Split second response times when querying multi-dimensional data

Benefits

- Gained the ability to quickly convert data into information
- Single version of the truth that can be accessed by all users
- Qlikview developers required only three days of external consultancy to create applications
- Users require little or no training to navigate and "fetch" the data they require for driving University decisions

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QlikView

Simplifying analysis for everyone



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