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Connecting the Extended Corporate Information Factory to the Enterprise

by [Claudia Imhoff](#), [Colin White](#)

Published: February 7, 2006

(Article URL: <http://www.b-eye-network.com/view/2346>)

The combination of the Extended Corporate Information Factory and the Smart BI Framework enables business intelligence processing to work cohesively with business transaction and business collaboration applications.

The first two articles in this series [Supporting the Smart Business: The Extended Corporate Information Factory](#) and [The Extended Corporate Information Factory Supports the Smart Business](#) summarize the business intelligence needs of smart businesses. They also explain how these requirements are enabled using the Extended Corporate Information Factory (CIF<sup>e</sup>). This final article discusses why it is important to tightly integrate smart business intelligence applications with business transaction and business collaborative processing. We will also explain how companies can use the CIF<sup>e</sup> in conjunction with the Smart BI Framework to build such an integrated environment.

### **Business Intelligence is Essential for Business Success**

Successful and agile companies rely on smart business intelligence applications to provide decision makers with the timely business information they need. These are not only strategic and tactical decisions, but also daily operational ones. The competitive and global nature of today's business environment requires that this information be available anywhere at any time. Smart business intelligence applications are mission-critical for many companies. Because of this, they must provide reliability and availability service levels comparable with those of their business transaction counterparts.

An agile decision-making and action-taking environment involves not only business intelligence applications, but also other enterprise systems. These systems include business transaction, business collaboration, content management and business portal applications. To be effective, business intelligence must be tightly integrated with these applications. This integration requirement applies not only to business operations and support, but also to IT strategy, design, development and maintenance.

### **The Role of the CIF<sup>e</sup> and the Smart BI Framework**

The objective of the CIF<sup>e</sup> is to provide a business intelligence environment for delivering consistent and high quality business information to IT applications and business users. The role of the Smart BI Framework is to surround the CIF<sup>e</sup> with a technology layer (see Figure 1 below) that integrates this business intelligence environment into the overall IT infrastructure. From the business's perspective, the

Smart BI Framework integrates the business intelligence environment provided by the CIF<sup>e</sup> with business processes, plans and people.

### **Integration with Business Processes**

Business transaction applications run business operations, as well as associated business processes and underlying activities. The role of business intelligence applications here is to monitor, analyze and report on these operations. The output from business intelligence applications is used to determine how well actual business operations are doing, compared with business targets. If these business targets are not being achieved, then either business plans or business operations must be adjusted accordingly.

Most current business intelligence applications have been used for measuring strategic and tactical business performance. The tight integration of the CIF<sup>e</sup> with operational business processes and activities enables business intelligence applications to capture in-flight business transaction events and data changes for supporting right-time operational business performance measurements. This integration also allows business intelligence services to be embedded directly into operational business-transaction process workflows for close to real-time analysis.

Business intelligence is presently data-centric. As it becomes more integrated with business operations, however, it will evolve to become more process-centric. By doing this, business intelligence results can be more easily related to business processes and their associated business activities. This evolution will lead to the integration of business intelligence performance management with process management technologies.

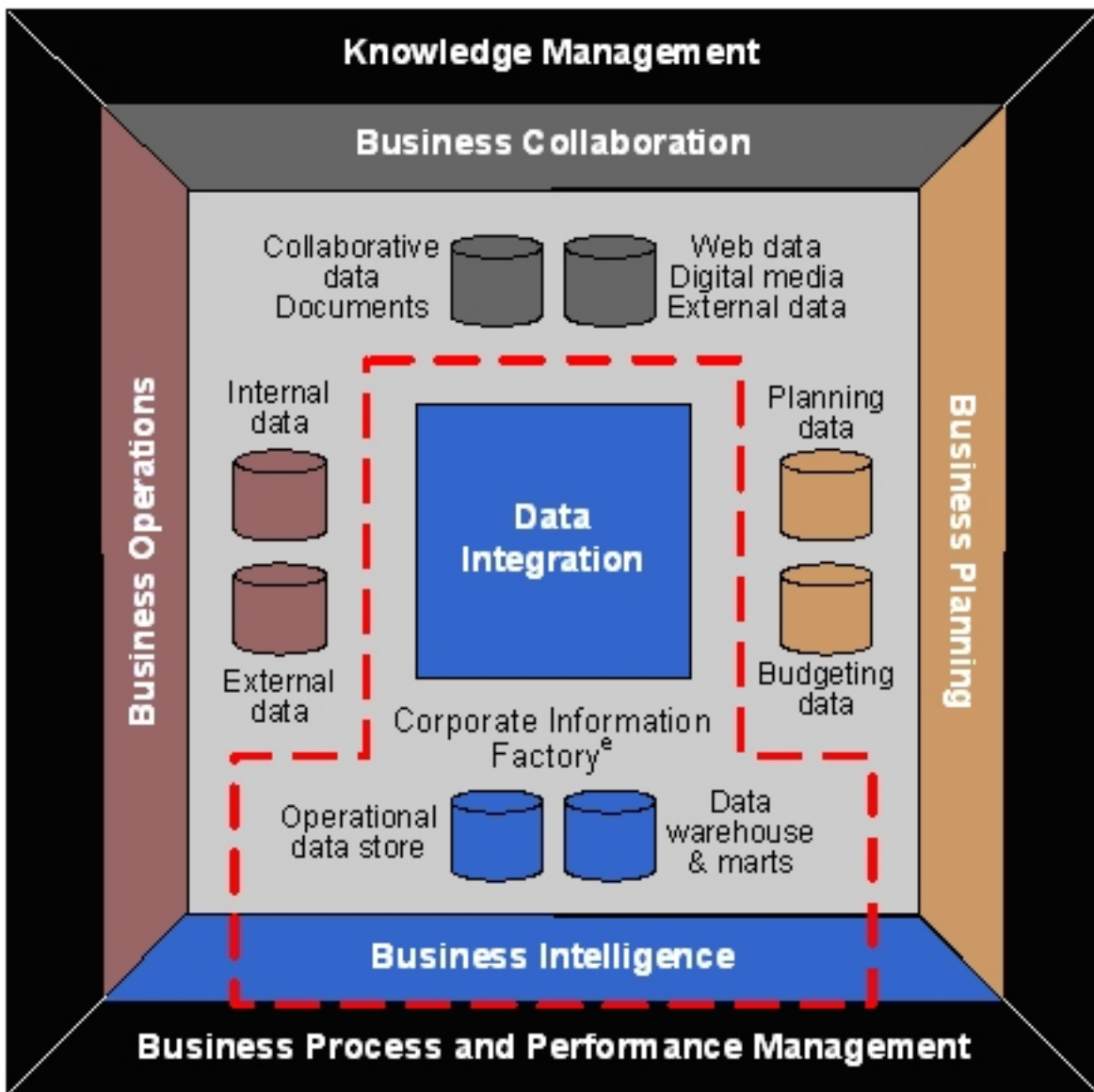


Figure 1: The Smart BI Framework

### Integration with Business Plans

As executives and managers define business plans and goals, they must communicate them through the corporate hierarchy. Targets must be developed for business goals and employees must be told what is expected of them to achieve those targets. Planning, budgeting and forecasting applications form the basis of the planning process, but collaboration capabilities are also required for communicating plans and goals.

Access to business planning processes from the CIF<sup>e</sup> environment enables business intelligence applications to measure business performance directly against goals and targets. Methodologies, such as balanced scorecards, are valuable here for formalizing the planning process and managing business goals.

Connecting business intelligence to business plans allows business intelligence results to be put into a business context. Essentially, this makes the business intelligence results actionable. This context is

necessary if business intelligence is to be used for measuring business performance, as well as managing and optimizing it. Actionable business intelligence is presented to business users through business dashboards, which are used to display business analytics, balanced scorecards and other types of business information.

### **Integration with Business People**

Integration of the CIF<sup>e</sup> with business collaboration processes enables people to share business intelligence and other types of business information. It also allows them to communicate and use their business knowledge for making business decisions and taking business actions. These are done to resolve business issues, which are identified by actionable business intelligence. Knowledge management, which brings together business portal, content management and collaboration tools, is the key to collaboration and sharing of information. The growing importance of business intelligence and business dashboards requires that they be integrated into the knowledge management environment as well.

### **The Objective**

The objective of the Extended Corporate Information Factory and the Smart BI Framework is to enable companies to work smarter and become more agile. the CIF<sup>e</sup> allows an organization to integrate and analyze data more quickly and effectively. The Smart BI Framework integrates the CIF<sup>e</sup> into the overall enterprise IT environment. This enables business intelligence processing to work cohesively with business transaction and business collaboration applications.

This concludes our series of articles on the Extended Corporate Information Factory and the Smart BI Framework. We hope the ideas presented in these articles will provide you with a solid foundation from which to begin building your smart business.

### **Recent articles by Claudia Imhoff**

- [Three Trends in Business Intelligence Technology](#)
- [The Extended Corporate Information Factory Supports the Smart Business](#)
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## **Claudia Imhoff -**

Claudia is the President and Founder of [Intelligent Solutions](#), a leading consultancy on CRM and business intelligence technologies and strategies. She is a popular speaker and internationally recognized expert, and serves as an advisor to many corporations, universities and leading technology companies. She has coauthored five books and more than 50 articles on these topics.

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## **Colin White -**

Colin is the Founder of [BI Research](#). He is well known for his in-depth knowledge of leading-edge business intelligence and business integration technologies, and how they can be used to build a smart and agile business. With more than 35 years of IT experience, he has consulted for dozens of companies throughout the world and is a frequent speaker at leading IT events. He is also conference chair for DCI's Portal, Collaboration and Content Management conference. Colin has written numerous articles on business intelligence and enterprise business integration. Colin has an expert channel and blog on the B-Eye-Network and can be reached at [cwhite@bi-research.com](mailto:cwhite@bi-research.com).

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