Dubai Statistics Center plays a key role in national development

Delivering insights to policy-makers faster and more frequently with IBM and Gulf Business Machines

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Dubai Statistics Center

Overview

The need
Dubai Statistics Center (DSC) wanted to give policy-makers up-to-date information to support development planning – but manual processes meant reports could only be published once a year.

The solution
DSC worked with IBM Premier Business Partner Gulf Business Machines to implement an e-statistics system based on IBM® Cognos® Business Intelligence software.

The benefit
Gives policy-makers the up-to-date information they need to plan sustainable development. Broadens access to national statistics to all of Dubai's citizens. Reduces manual workload and accelerates the reporting cycle.

As the official source for statistics in one of the fastest-growing urban centers in the world, how do you ensure that senior decision-makers get instant access to up-to-date information?

Dubai Statistics Center (DSC) faced the formidable challenge of collating, analyzing and publishing a huge body of data from surveys, censuses and 30 government departments. DSC uses this data to generate demographic, social and economic statistics for Dubai, including key indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP), inflation and household spending.

To give government officials, researchers, businesses and various public sector organisations an accurate and deep insight into Dubai's economic growth, social development and evolving business climate in various areas, DSC deployed a comprehensive analytics solution based on IBM Cognos Business Intelligence software.

Accurate statistics drive decision-making

In the past, DSC's output relied on labor-intensive processes, as Ahmad Ali Al Dashti, Director – Information Technology & Centralized Statistical Systems Department at Dubai Statistics Center, explains:

"Previously, we gathered data from government departments via email and fax, collected information via field surveys and censuses, and then collated and analyzed it in complicated spreadsheets. With all the extraction, analysis and data quality work required, DSC had to invest a lot of time in preparing the data for dissemination. As a result of that, we could only publish the results of our analyses once per year, which we disseminated in hard-copy form, as a book of reports."

With Dubai's population growing rapidly and more businesses looking to invest in the region, DSC wanted the ability to publish its data more frequently, and broaden access to the statistics it provides. To meet its objective, DSC decided to implement a web-based business intelligence solution.

"As part of the Dubai Strategic Plan 2015, an increasing number of local government services in Dubai are now provided online," says Ahmad Ali Al Dashti. "We felt that the e-services model would enable us to offer similar benefits to our audience of citizens, business leaders and senior government employees – especially 24/7 access and self-service functionality."

Solution components

Software
- IBM® Cognos® Business Intelligence version 10
  - IBM Cognos Analysis Studio
  - IBM Cognos Metric Studio
  - IBM Cognos Mobile
  - IBM Cognos Report Studio
  - IBM Cognos Workspace Advanced
- IBM InfoSphere® DataStage®
- IBM SPSS®

IBM Business Partner
- Gulf Business Machines

Deploying IBM Cognos Business Intelligence

After considering demonstrations from a number of solution vendors and performing a full evaluation process, DSC chose IBM Cognos Business Intelligence software.

"We chose Cognos because we felt it was the right solution to meet our objectives for our organization," says Ahmad Ali Al Dashti. "In particular, we were impressed with the user-friendliness, flexibility and cost-effectiveness of the IBM solution, which were key criteria in the evaluation process."

Working together with IBM and IBM Premier Business Partner Gulf Business Machines, DSC implemented an e-statistics system based on IBM Cognos Business Intelligence. Using IBM InfoSphere® DataStage® software, the Center can extract, transform and load the bulk of its data into a centralized database without the need for manual processes. The DataStage software plays a crucial role in the context of DSC's statistics data warehouse.

Ahmad Ali Al Dashti comments: "We chose Gulf Business Machines because of their long-standing reputation for expertise in IBM analytics solutions – as well as their impressive track record of successful solution deployments in the Middle East. Working with IBM and Gulf Business Machines was a positive experience; both parties helped us to complete the implementation on time and within budget."

Online access to statistical data

With the IBM Cognos solution implemented, more than 200 users from over 50 of Dubai's government departments now have access to the latest statistical data – including senior decision-makers from the Executive Council of Dubai, responsible for the highest level of strategic planning.

"Today, we can import most of our data automatically using XML files or direct connections to databases in 27 government departments," says Ahmad Ali Al Dashti. "Excluding the census, which is run once every five years, we now update the majority of our statistical data once a month and publish it online instantly – making the results of our analyses available much more frequently than ever before. This means policy-makers and our other customers can make better-informed, more timely decisions for the future of our growing nation."

Using a web browser and an internet connection, or a Cognos Mobile app on a tablet or smartphone, Dubai's decision-makers can register and log into the e-statistics system anywhere, anytime.

"The e-statistics landing page shows all of our government data sources – for example, the Dubai tourism authority, immigration office and police department," says Ahmad Ali Al Dashti. "To make it easy for users to find what they are looking for, the solution also enables them to also view the data according to themes such as economics, transport and health, or quickly switch to the most frequently used indicators such as inflation and GDP."

> *"We used to gather, collate and analyze our data in complicated spreadsheets. It took around six months to get the data ready, and we could only publish the results in hard-copy once per year. Now we can publish statistical data online every month, enabling government officials and business leaders to make strategic decisions based on up-to-date information."*
>
> — Ahmad Ali Al Dashti, Director – Information Technology & Centralized Statistical Systems Department at Dubai Statistics Center

Empowering end users

To provide both standardized reports and ad hoc analytics capabilities, DSC uses Cognos Report Studio and Cognos Analysis Studio.

"In the past, we would often be asked to build customized reports, which we created using spreadsheets and disseminated via email," says Ahmad Ali Al Dashti. "If changes were needed, we had to rebuild the entire report from scratch, which required considerable investment of time and costs.

"Thanks to the IBM solution, this has all changed. Using Report Studio, we can easily design or modify reports using a set of intuitive tools, and instantly publish our changes online. Users can slice and dice and drill down to gain deeper insights, and we enable them to create their own reports in Analysis Studio by dragging and dropping database fields, adding formulae and generating graphs."

Planning for the future

Following the initial success of the IBM Cognos solution, DSC has successfully implemented the IBM Cognos Workspace Advanced module, and is currently in the process of deploying IBM Cognos Metric Studio.

"Using Workspace Advanced, we have extended the functionalities of Analysis Studio and Report Studio – enabling our users to import multiple data sources into one single dashboard," says Ahmad Ali Al Dashti. "When our Metric Studio solution goes live, we will be able to offer all of our government departments a centralized system to manage their key performance indicators."

With a centralized repository and analytics platform for all of the Emirate's statistical data, DSC has created a foundation on which it will be able to build and deliver new services. For example, DSC is currently investigating the possibility of gathering data directly from the systems of its government partners, instead of using aggregated figures. The DSC team is also interested in using text analytics to gain new insights into areas such as customer satisfaction and service improvement.

In both cases, the volume of information that needs to be managed and analyzed would increase significantly, but DSC believes that IBM Cognos will be capable of meeting the demands of a Big Data analytics environment.

Ahmad Ali Al Dashti concludes: "We have already come a long way on our analytics journey. Publishing statistical data online every month with Cognos is a major step forward, because it enables government officials and business leaders to make strategic decisions around planning, development and investment based on up-to-date information. By continuing our close collaboration with Gulf Business Machines, we also plan to use IBM SPSS® software to extract even more actionable insights from our data in the future."

About Gulf Business Machines

Founded in 1990, IBM Premier Business Partner Gulf Business Machines is the leading IT solutions provider in the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. With more than 1,000 employees and a wide range of cross-sector expertise, Gulf Business Machines provides extensive IT solutions and services – from consulting, resource deployment and integration, to after-sales support.

To learn more about products, services and solutions from Gulf Business Machines, please visit gbm4ibm.com

About IBM Business Analytics

IBM Business Analytics software delivers data-driven insights that help organizations work smarter and outperform their peers. This comprehensive portfolio includes solutions for business intelligence, predictive analytics and decision management, performance management, and risk management.

Business Analytics solutions enable companies to identify and visualize trends and patterns in areas, such as customer analytics, that can have a profound effect on business performance. They can compare scenarios, anticipate potential threats and opportunities, better plan, budget and forecast resources, balance risks against expected returns and work to meet regulatory requirements. By making analytics widely available, organizations can align tactical and strategic decision-making to achieve business goals.

For more information

For further information please visit **ibm.com**/business-analytics

Business Analytics software

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