

Introduction

Oracle Business Intelligence Discoverer is an intuitive ad-hoc query, reporting, analysis and Web publishing tool set that gives business users immediate access to information in databases. Oracle BI Discoverer enables business users at all levels of the organization to make faster and more informed business decisions. Using any standard Web browser, you have secure and immediate access to data from both relational and multidimensional data sources.

Oracle BI Discoverer has seen significant improvements in capabilities and deployment architecture since its inception in the early 90's. Many thousands of customers have successfully utilized the easy-to-use ad-hoc query and reporting tool to make better decisions. This paper summarizes Oracle's development strategy for Oracle BI Discoverer within the context of Oracle's greater Business Intelligence strategy.

This document covers:

- Oracle BI Discoverer Product Strategy
- Oracle BI Discoverer 10.1.2.3
- Oracle BI Discoverer 11g
- Oracle BI Spreadsheet Add-In
- Oracle BI Discoverer Roadmap Functionality
- Oracle BI Discoverer Support Policies
- Recommendations for Oracle BI Discoverer customers

Oracle BI Discoverer Product Strategy

Discoverer has evolved into a fully internet-enabled application using a proven 3-tier architecture to scale to thousands of users and is integrated with other value added services within the Oracle Database and Oracle Fusion Middleware to deliver robust BI functionality. The development focus has been to:

- Enhance usability of the product at every opportunity to lower the bar on who can access and use the business reporting and insight that Discoverer makes available.
- Expose and take advantage of powerful technologies within the Oracle Database and Oracle Fusion Middleware.

Oracle continues to invest in new technologies within the Oracle Database and Oracle Fusion Middleware, and Discoverer will continue to be integrated and released with future releases of Oracle Fusion Middleware to leverage that investment. The product charter remains unchanged since its inception: to make the powerful server technology accessible to non-technical users who require business information and analysis for the Oracle Database.

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Oracle BI Discoverer 10.1.2.3

This section describes the key functionality available with Discoverer 10.1.2.3, released in March 2008.

Discoverer integration with Oracle Business Intelligence Publisher

The integration of Discoverer with Oracle BI Publisher (previously known as XML Publisher) was delivered as a one-off patch in 2007, and is now more widely available with the Discoverer 10.1.2.3 release.

Oracle BI Publisher is an enterprise reporting solution to author, manage, and deliver all types of highly formatted documents eliminating the need for costly point solutions.

Discoverer integration with Oracle BI publisher has the following benefits

- Rich formatting capabilities
 - Use the Oracle BI Publisher Template Builder for Microsoft® Word to use the formatting features of Microsoft Word to format content.
- Rich layout capabilities
 - Use the Oracle BI Publisher Template Builder for Microsoft Word to use the document layout and formatting features of Microsoft Word.
- Create multiple templates per Discoverer worksheet
 - Layout templates in BI Publisher can be built using familiar desktop applications such as Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat®. Oracle BI Publisher plug-ins are provided to help the report designer to build the layout they want in their favored application.
- View as PDF, RTF, XLS, PPT, XML
 - Oracle BI Publisher is able to generate multiple output formats from a single data source and template in multiple formats.
- Schedule and distribute to thousands of users
 - Schedule frequency (Once, daily, weekly, immediately) and delivery destinations (Email, FTP, WebDAV, FAX, Printer) can be configured in Oracle BI Publisher, allowing Discoverer content to be generated and distributed on a scheduled basis.
- Analyze and refresh Discoverer data in Microsoft Excel®
 - Relational and OLAP data can be pulled into Excel from multiple data sources for analysis

This integration requires Oracle BI Publisher 10.1.3.3.0 or above. Since Oracle BI Publisher is also available with Oracle Business Intelligence Suite Enterprise Edition, version 10.1.3.3.0 of Oracle BI EE can also be used.

More information about Oracle BI Publisher can be found at:

<http://www.oracle.com/technology/products/xml-publisher/index.html>

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Advanced Calculated Members in Discoverer OLAP

Building on the introduction of calculated members functionality in the 10.1.2.2 release of Discoverer, advanced calculated members can be created with the new calculated member editor in the 10.1.2.3 release.

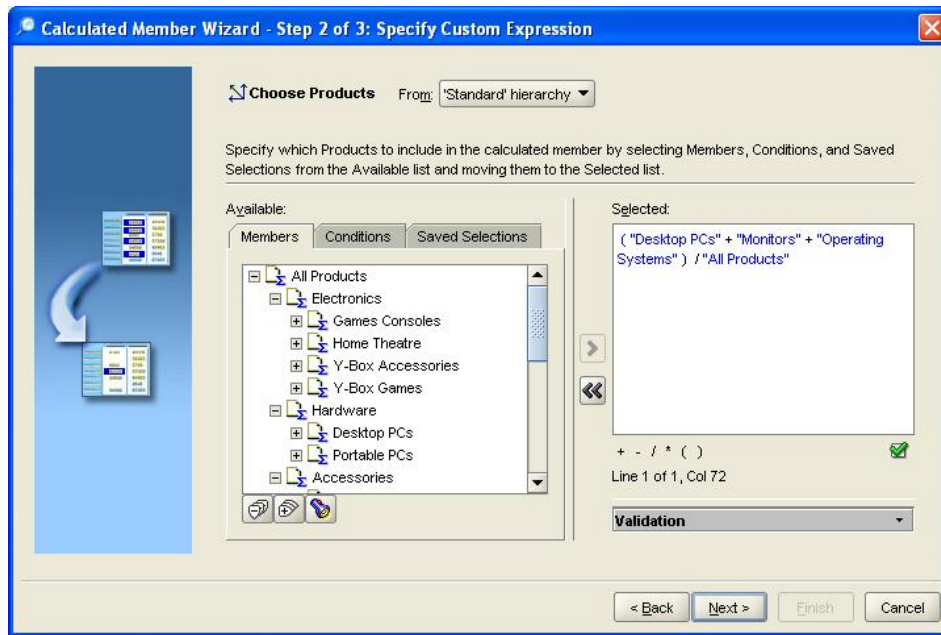


Figure 1 - Create custom calculated members in Discoverer OLAP

Oracle BI Discoverer 11g

This section describes the key functionality planned for the Discoverer 11g release.

Discoverer integration with Oracle BI Suite Enterprise Edition Plus

Oracle BI Suite Enterprise Edition Plus (EE) is an innovative and comprehensive market leading BI platform that delivers the full range of BI capabilities on a next-generation architecture designed for true enterprise deployment. It enables IT organizations to define a single, logical view of all enterprise data—whether in a single data warehouse or across multiple operational and analytic sources—and provide business users with new levels of self-sufficiency to access, interact with, and utilize this information to increase effectiveness.

This integration shall require Oracle Business Intelligence Suite Enterprise Edition Plus, Release 11 or above.

More information about Oracle BI Enterprise Edition can be found at:

<http://www.oracle.com/technology/products/bi/enterprise-edition.html>

Discoverer customers will benefit from the following planned integration with Oracle BI EE:

Discoverer integration with Oracle BI EE Interactive Dashboards

Oracle BI EE Interactive Dashboards are fully interactive, graphical information dashboards that provide live, real-time data across enterprise data sources. They can be personalized for each user and role and provide unrivaled ease of use through a simple point and click interface for all users. The 11g release will enable Discoverer worksheet content to be fully integrated into these dashboards.

Discoverer integration with Oracle BI EE Delivers

Oracle BI EE Delivers enables automated detection, alerting and notification of problems and opportunities through constant monitoring across operational and analytical sources by 'iBot' services. The Oracle BI EE 11g release introduces support for the creation of iBots based on Discoverer worksheets. When an iBot is activated, the resulting alert and report content can be distributed across a wide range of formats and devices. In addition, the ability to logically chain iBots or initiate other actions or scripts when an iBot is activated enables powerful interaction with business processes.

Discoverer Integration with Oracle Fusion Middleware 11g

Oracle Fusion Middleware is the industry's most comprehensive and most cohesive application platform suite. It is a pre-integrated portfolio of customer-proven software that spans from portals and process managers to application infrastructure, developer tools, and business intelligence.

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The addition of BEA products to Oracle Fusion Middleware advances Oracle's middleware strategy and further strengthens key areas of the Oracle Fusion Middleware family.

Oracle Discoverer, as a component of Oracle Fusion Middleware, is planned to ship with Oracle Fusion Middleware 11g and run on Oracle WebLogic Server. (previously known as BEA WebLogic Server)

Discoverer will continue to be integrated and released with the Oracle Fusion Middleware with greatly improved system manageability and monitoring planned for the 11g release.

Discoverer Web Services

The Oracle BI Discoverer Web Services are part of an Application Programming Interface (API) that enables a client application to do the following:

- Obtain Discoverer connections, workbooks and worksheets details
- Execute worksheet queries within custom development projects

Oracle BI Discoverer Web Services significantly increase the scope for Discoverer interoperability with business systems and processes as part of a Service Oriented Architecture (SOA).

Beyond Oracle BI Discoverer 11g

Looking beyond the specific releases described in this document, Oracle plans to enhance Discoverer with support for organizing the workbooks stored in the database and tighter integration with user populations defined in Oracle Internet Directory. More Information about this and other enhancements will be published when available.

Support for JSR 168 Portlet Standard

The ability to publish Discoverer content into JSR 168 compliant Portals is planned, enabling Discoverer content to be used in corporate portals and dashboards compliant with the standard. This project is planned after the first release of 11g.

Oracle Business Intelligence Spreadsheet Add-In

The Oracle BI Spreadsheet Add-In enables end users to display and navigate Oracle OLAP data from within Excel. Users can treat the Oracle OLAP data as regular Excel data. Using a wizard-driven interface, users can select data from Oracle OLAP simply by choosing from a list of values or by creating advanced selections, such as those based on exceptions, top/bottom analysis, or hierarchies.

Oracle BI Spreadsheet Add-In is certified against Microsoft Excel® 2007 and is available for download from OTN.

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More details about Oracle BI Spreadsheet Add-In can be found at

http://www.oracle.com/technology/products/bi/spreadsheet_addin/index.html

Oracle plans to certify Oracle BI Spreadsheet Add-in on the Windows Vista operating system.

Oracle BI Discoverer Support Policies

Discoverer has a large and very active install base, with customers using Discoverer worksheets as the cornerstone of their reporting and decision-making systems including Oracle's own e-Business Suite. Oracle recognizes this considerable investment and remains committed to the long-term support of Discoverer.

As a component of Oracle Fusion Middleware, Oracle's support policy for Discoverer is covered under the support policy for Oracle Fusion Middleware. For example, Oracle BI Discoverer 10gR2 10.1.2 will be supported for the same time periods that Oracle supports Oracle Application Server 10gR2 10.1.2.

Listed below are the timelines for Lifetime Support for Oracle Fusion Middleware (which includes Discoverer)

<i>Existing Oracle Fusion Middleware Releases</i>				
Release	GA Date	Premiere Support Ends	Extended Support Ends	Sustaining Support Ends
9iAS R2 9.0.2	Apr 2002	Jul 2005	Not Offered	Jul 2008
9iAS R2 9.0.3	Oct 2002	Jul 2005	Not Offered	Jul 2008
10g 9.0.4	Dec 2003	Dec 2006	Dec 2008	Dec 2009
10gR2 10.1.2	Jan-Oct 2005	Dec 2010	Dec 2011	Indefinite

Note that support retirement dates have already been announced for Oracle9i Application Server R2 9.0.2, Oracle9i Application Server R2 9.0.3, Oracle Application Server 10g 9.0.4, and Oracle Application Server 10gR2. Oracle Fusion Middleware releases beginning with 11g will adopt the Lifetime Support Policy. Also note that if you are using Discoverer as part of the Oracle e-Business Suite, you are covered by the e-Business Suite Lifetime Support Policy.

Note: Error Correction Support (ECS) for Discoverer 4i within the E-Business Suite 11i Applications technical stack **ended** on **31-OCT-2006**.

Extended Support(ES) for Discoverer 4i will be provided till **31-OCT-2009**.

Currently, we document that in support note: [Note 237607.1'ALERT: Required and Recommended Patch Levels For All Discoverer Versions](#)

For more information on Oracle's Lifetime Support Policy, please refer to the Lifetime Support Policy FAQ located at:

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<http://www.oracle.com/support/library/oracle-lifetime-support-policy-faq.pdf>

<http://www.oracle.com/support/lifetime-support-policy.html>

Recommendations for Oracle BI Discoverer customers

Existing Discoverer customers can continue to use Discoverer with the assurance of Oracle's Lifetime Support Policy, as well as with the continued planned enhancements and integration with future releases of Oracle Fusion Middleware and Oracle BI EE.

Existing customers are strongly encouraged to upgrade to Oracle BI Discoverer 10gR2 10.1.2.3 and to migrate to web deployment to take advantage of the many new exciting and powerful enhancements in this version and to get the best support benefits available.

Discoverer customers who choose to migrate to Oracle BI Enterprise Edition will be able to take advantage of a platform that offers:

- Support for multiple, simultaneous heterogeneous data sources. Customers will be able to leverage Oracle Business Intelligence against the Oracle Database (relational as well as the OLAP option), Teradata, IBM DB/2, Microsoft SQL Server, Microsoft OLAP Services, Oracle e-Business Suite (including Peoplesoft and Siebel Applications), Oracle Essbase and SAP B/W.
- A unified semantic business view of all the above data sources. Your enterprise can now present a single definition for "customer" or "product" that applies to and is mapped from all the above disparate data sources, meaning business users will have access to a single coherent view of the business. Metadata can also be translated, so this single semantic view supports multiple presentation languages.
- Powerful metadata design tool offers a visual layout tool of your data source schemas as well as support for multiple administrators. Utility wizards simplify creation of common standards, such as aggregate persistence, item renaming and other data quality tasks. Multiple levels of folders are also supported.
- A full feature ad-hoc query and reporting tool that is 100% thin client and provides multiple views of the same data. For example you could have two different versions of a pivot table, a funnel graph and filter definitions to create a compound view for complete analysis.
- A built in integrated dashboard for quickly publishing and sharing reports.

The 10.1.3.4 release of Oracle BI Enterprise Edition contains the Oracle Discoverer Metadata Conversion Assistant. This is a command line utility that greatly accelerates the conversion of Discoverer metadata in the form of an EEX file to Oracle BI EE metadata in the form of an RPD file. In addition, technical white papers covering best practices and the availability of Oracle Consulting Services and Oracle Partner Services will ensure a rapid and successful outcome.

More information on Discoverer migration to Oracle BI EE please visit

<http://www.oracle.com/technology/products/bi/discoverer-migration/index.html>

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ORACLE FUSION MIDDLEWARE

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