



For the Complete Technology & Database Professional

A NEW DIMENSION TO DATA WAREHOUSING: 2011 IOUG DATA WAREHOUSING SURVEY

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Data collection and analysis performed with SurveyMethods.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Data warehousing is undergoing the most radical transformation seen since it was first conceived in the 1970s, and brought to market in the late 1980s and 1990s.

One reason for this transformation is that data warehouses are on the front lines of the Big Data explosion. Not only do companies need to manage and store hundreds of terabytes to petabytes of data, they also need to find ways to extract the maximum value from this torrent of increasingly complex and diverse information—including unstructured or schema-less data—that is being generated at an escalating rate.

To be of value, this data needs to be available in real time not only to the traditional users of warehouses—analysts with Ph.Ds—but also to a widening set of employees throughout an organization, as well as for critical business applications. To meet these burgeoning needs for accessibility in fast-growing and increasingly complex data environments, new technologies and approaches are surfacing, from ready-to-run database machines and appliances that can be quickly integrated into data environments to cloud-based solutions that provide expertise and support on an incremental basis.

Findings from a new survey of Independent Oracle Users Group (IOUG) members indicate that while most companies have well-established data warehouse systems, adoption is still limited within their organizations. The survey, underwritten by Oracle Corporation and conducted by Unisphere Research, a division of Information Today, Inc., included input from 421 data managers and professionals. Many respondents report a significant surge of data within their data warehouses in recent times, fueled not only by growing volumes of transaction data, but unstructured data, as well.

Respondents to the survey have a variety of job roles and represent a wide range of company types, sizes, and industry verticals. The greatest number of respondents (34%) hold the title of database administrator, followed by that of director or manager. Close to one-third come from very large organizations with more than 10,000 employees. By industry sector, the majority of respondents come from software and tech companies, government agencies, educational institutions, financial services, healthcare, and utilities and telecommunications companies. (See Figures 31–33 at the end of this report.)

Key Findings:

The following summarizes the survey results, which explore issues and solutions around managing fast-growing data warehousing environments. Key highlights and findings from the survey include the following:

- Companies recognize the analytical power that a data warehouse foundation provides, but the technology is not as widely used across enterprises as it could be. Data warehouses serve as the foundation for business intelligence and analytics applications across 66% of the companies in the survey. However, in many cases, they remain isolated from mainstream business operations. Most are in-house, customized systems, mainly used by analysts and top decision makers. Only 33% of respondents' companies enable access to their marketing and sales departments—one of the most critical areas where data warehouse value is realized. As one respondent said, her organization “is not fully leveraging the capabilities of data warehousing. However, there is a high expectation, and integration insights gained are wonderful. We're looking forward to including more business intelligence analytical tools.” Another respondent echoed this view, stating, “The company currently is still learning how to leverage the data warehouse and there have been some real nice visible wins for the business and IT from the data warehouse. However, I still consider it to be underutilized.”
- Data warehouse managers are struggling with the rise of increasingly complex and diverse information, including unstructured or schema-less data, being generated at an escalating rate. Close to 90% of respondents say the volume of data in their warehouses has increased over the past year, and they expect this data growth to continue. Close to 50%, however, are not certain if their data warehouses will be able to scale to meet future Big Data requirements.
- While companies are conservative in their plans for data warehouse upgrades, there is considerable movement toward implementation of ready-to-run solutions. Respondents expect to see numerous benefits from upcoming implementation efforts, including better performance and greater insights for decision makers. While data warehouse systems tend to run separately from production environments, close to 40% of respondents expect to see more convergence, as data warehouses become more closely embedded with the rest of their infrastructure.
- Thirty-three percent of respondents report that they made significant data warehouse investments in 2010–2011, but are uncertain about investments in 2012. IT and data managers are charged with day-to-day oversight of data warehouses, but business leaders weigh in on the final decisions about new purchases.

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