



## Case Study

### **Improving SAP BusinessObjects Utilization at CBL Properties**

**St. Louis – April 15, 2013**

Hello everyone! This is Eric. I'd like to introduce you to our friend and customer, Jody Bankston. Jody was kind enough to be our latest guest blogger. Jody had great ideas for managing his SAP BusinessObjects environments and leveraged our technology partnership with Sherlock to do so. Over to Jody!

Everybody knows that FedEx does a great job of delivering packages..."when it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight". Most people see the amazing logistics system that FedEx built, but they rarely think about the near real-time analytics systems that have helped FedEx customers track their most important documents. Many companies have even opened up new markets and built new products and services based on super quick distribution with real-time tracking. FedEx's ability to track and monitor every package at near real-time is a real strategic advantage and earns customer's loyalty in droves.

The ability to track and monitor your analytics system is just as important.

As the Director of Technology, Strategy, and Analytics at CBL & Associates (a large commercial real estate company that owns over 80 malls), I often wondered how our Business Intelligence (BI) efforts were helping people throughout the business. Many departments received informational assistance from our SAP BusinessObjects systems, but it was hard to predict where and how our efforts were best being utilized and how to hone them to make more of an impact.

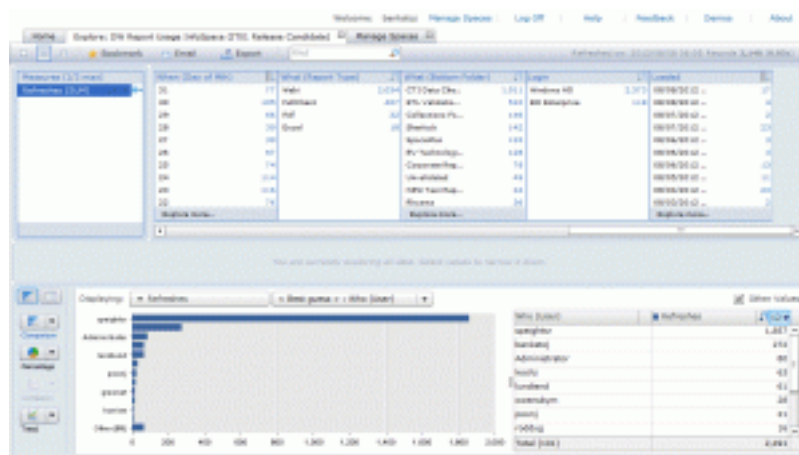
After reading a presentation by Dallas Marks about using BI to track your BI projects ("KPIs for Business Intelligence"), we decided to try and track at near-real time the demands that were being requested by our users on our reporting and analytics systems. SAP BusinessObjects currently has some audit activity information, but we really needed a better way to track what

our customers were demanding. This is also complicated since CBL is predominantly a “Query on Demand” shop...which makes it hard sometimes to anticipate certain system loads. Add to that the impending conversion of Desktop Intelligence reports to Web Intelligence, and you can see that CBL really needed a way of tracking the “Who, What, When” of measuring the demand side on our Analytics system.

We looked at several different ways of tracking this information internally, but once we were introduced to Sherlock by our friends at EV Technologies, it was clear that Sherlock would be able to help us track not only the health of our existing SAP BusinessObjects services but also monitor the demand characteristics that we needed so badly to better understand.

Once we were able to capture every report refresh, who requested it, when they requested it, what folder the report came from, and what tool built it...we knew we were onto something really good. Now we just needed to get that information out in a near real-time manner. So we decided to take advantage of SAP BusinessObjects Explorer to create an InfoSpace that would run every 2 hours and provide an easy to use method to answer lots of different questions about what was happening in our SAP BusinessObjects systems. You want to know what reports are the most refreshed...we got it. You have a user that is running everything under the sun...we know who they are...within 2 hours. You want to see which departments aren't exactly utilizing the system as much as you thought they would...we know exactly which ones.

Now that we know what is really happening with our customers, we can start to improve things. Right off the bat, the top ranked report in terms of refreshes looked like a candidate for intervention. We had one user that was refreshing this report 8 or 12 times a day. After a quick call inquiring about this usage pattern, we learned that practically all users needed the report for 4 separate segments of our business. We quickly changed the report to handle all four segments through one single query refresh and simply put those segments on 4 separate tabs of the report.



The reporting was improved. The system load was reduced. The users were happier.

Maybe I should have done a better job during the needs assessment portion of this work, but there are many times that issues like this sneak by. Business demands rarely come to me in nice neat bundles. But without a way of seeing into the demands that are coming from my users, I would have never been able to diagnose and correct this issue as quickly and pro-actively.

Sherlock helps us see what's happening in near real-time and pro-actively fix things that we would have never known about. And in a public business where doing financial reporting is so important..."it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight".

### **About EV Technologies**

A predominantly Web Intelligence shop. EV Technologies is an SAP Partner and an SAP Authorized Education Partner based in the United States and Australia. Customers contract EV Technologies for strategic business intelligence architecture, managed services, and application development needs in the SAP Analytics, Database, and Technology ecosystems. Sherlock 3, the flagship solution, is available for the SAP BusinessObjects BI Platform, SAP Edge solutions, and SAP Crystal solutions.

For more information, please visit: [evtechnologies.com](http://evtechnologies.com)