



'Dovetail makes BI as simple as Web search with EasyAsk'

Computing SA exclusive

Mark Davies... we have taken the grudge out of a really mundane task.

Logistics software company, Dovetail, has chosen Progress EasyAsk for Operational BI to deliver information on demand to its customers.

Through a simple search-like interface, EasyAsk aims to enable users to ask questions in plain English and to access the information they are looking for immediately. It delivers faster reporting time than Dovetail's previous reporting tool, and empowers users at all levels with the ability to retrieve BI data, the company says.

"Our focus is on providing customers with logistics support software that manages the physical movement of products, enabling them to improve their operational effectiveness and create competitive advantage," says Reggie Pillay, director at Dovetail. "We were looking for a BI solution that would radically cut down the time our customers spend creating reports, and EasyAsk proved to be the best tool available."

Dovetail customers will now be able to create saveable and searchable reports rather than having to re-create a query each time that information is needed, he adds. Because the reports can be saved as graphs or charts, it is said to be easy to share the information and to track changes in the data. The system can even alert users to changes in client profitability.

Dovetail systems architect, Mark Davies, says EasyAsk was quick to implement. "We had a one-day crash course provided by Progress Software, after which we developed

a proof of concept and began embedding the tool into our own FreightWare solution for warehouse and transport management."

Dovetail is also one of the first companies in SA to have used EasyAsk's Web services to embed it into their existing application. This, says the company, allowed it to enhance its application's reporting infrastructure to use the power and flexibility of EasyAsk without users having to leave their application.

"We can now add 'sizzle' to our reports by plugging in other third-party Active-X components such as 3D graphing tools to give users the ability to see the state of their business in one glance," Davies adds. "It is so simple to use that our customers will be comfortable with the new interface."

Davies adds that it took a total of 15 days to roll out the product and to build a set of foundation questions. Because EasyAsk integrates with existing BI solutions, it allows people to access the information they need to improve business operations without the need for specialist skills or additional training, he states.

"The main benefit to our customers is that we have taken the grudge out of a really mundane task. They can ask any questions they want and define their own reports, whether they are looking for day-on-day delivery reports, information on turnover, or profitability data," says Davies. ■