

Discovery Versus Delivery: A Comparison of Client Reporting Tools

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[Presentation Abstract

- There is a saying that goes something like this: If your only tool is a hammer then every problem looks like a nail. What if you have more than one tool? Then it becomes a challenge to figure out which is the best tool for a particular job. As BusinessObjects developers we have several different tools available. This presentation will discuss strengths of the client tools and offer advice on how to select the proper tool for the job. We will cover only the client tools, specifically Crystal, Web Intelligence, and Xcelsius.
- Session Code 603


[Learning Points

- Know the difference between a report developer and a report consumer
- Better requirements lead to better report delivery
 - Don't just consider the content
 - Consider the method used to consume the report
- Use the right tool for the right job

[About Brian

- Crystal developer for 12 years
 - Specialize in large enterprise / Fortune 100 companies
- Crystal SIG Chair for ASUG
- One of five experts selected for Reportapalooza
 - <http://www.reportapalooza.com>
- Vice-chair for Dallas/Forth Worth ASUG chapter
- I blog
 - <http://www.crystalblogger.com>

[About Dave

- Dedicated to BusinessObjects solutions since 1995
 - Consultant and trainer for fifteen years
 - Currently BI Solutions Architect for PepsiCo
 - Note: Content is my own and does not reflect my employer
- 15 consecutive years presenting at major BI conferences
 - United States, Europe, Australia
- Charter member of BOB
 - <http://busobj.forumtopics.com>
- I Blog! Dave's Adventures in Business Intelligence 
 - <http://www.dagira.com>
- SAP Mentor for 2009 – 2010



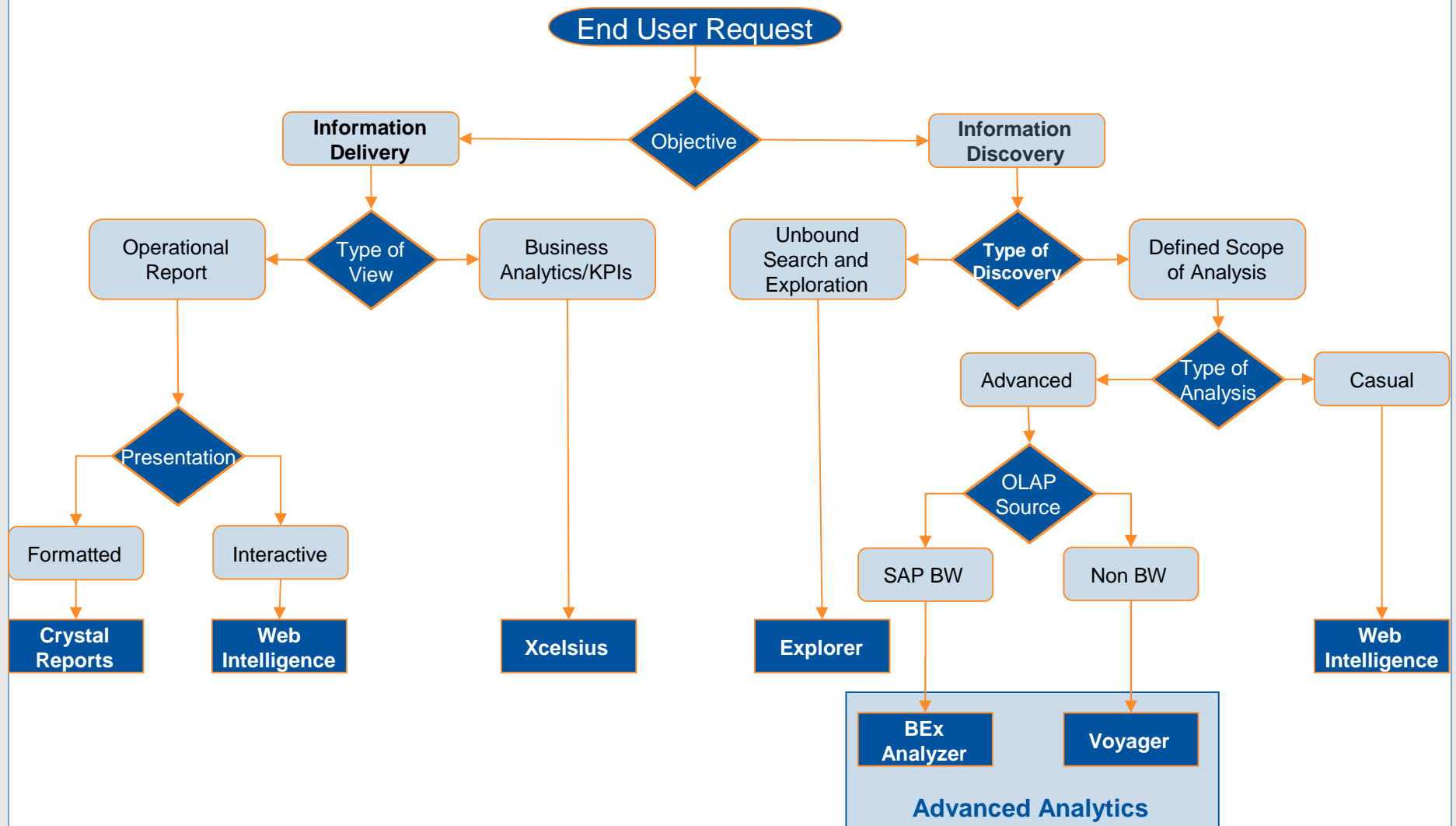
[Demonstration Platform

- Demonstration universes
 - Island Resorts Marketing
 - Xtreme Mountain Bikes
 - eFashion
- Software configuration
 - BusinessObjects Enterprise XI 3.1
 - Oracle 10g
- BusinessObjects toolset
 - Web Intelligence Rich Client
 - Crystal Reports 2008
 - Xcelsius aka Crystal Dashboard Designer



Demonstration slides will be highlighted with this icon

[Delivery Versus Discovery Decision Tree



[Delivery Versus Discovery

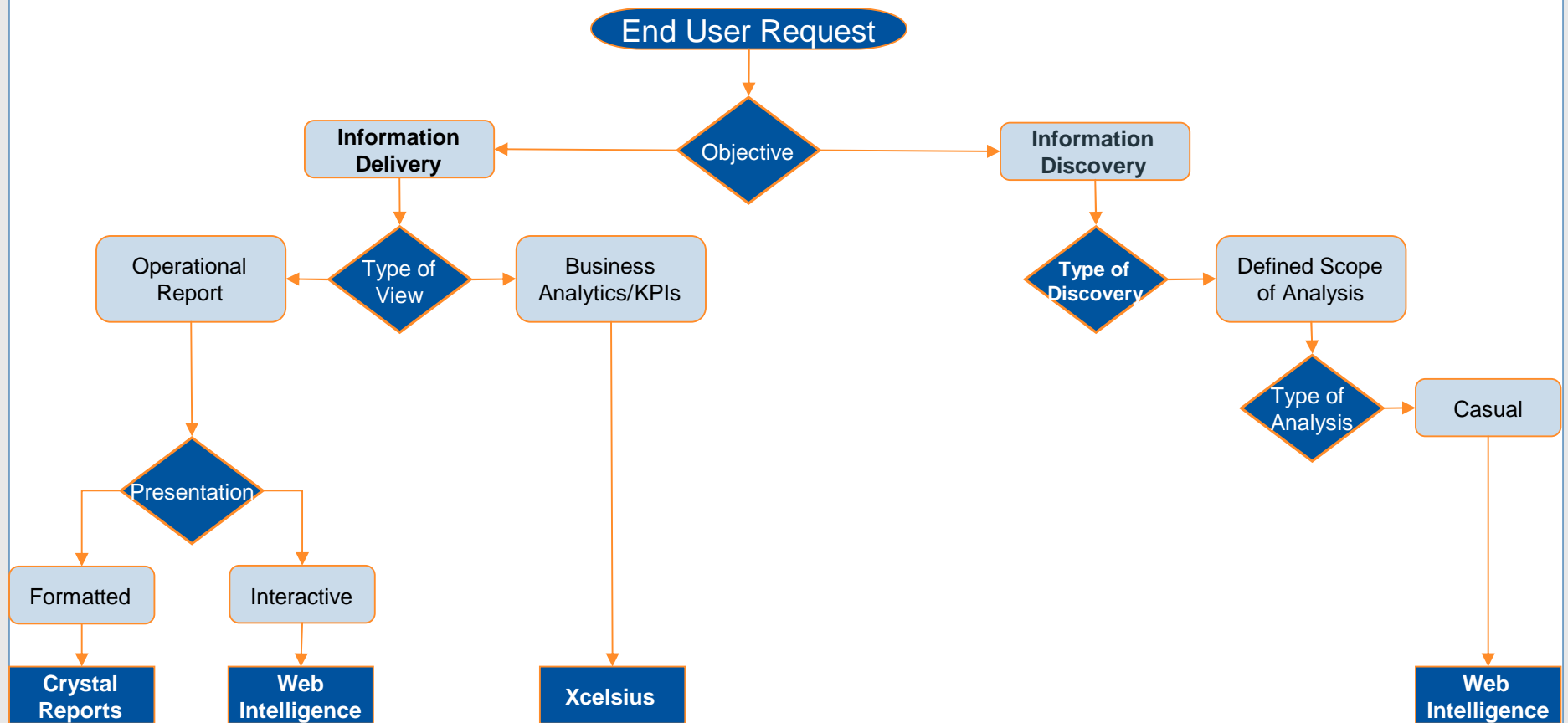
■ Delivery implies

- Developer designed and coded content
- Content is typically designed for scheduled distribution
- Constrained to information and structure provided by coder
- User is expecting pixel-perfect formatting

■ Discovery implies

- User-driven / user-created content
- Content is frequently used once and discarded
- Freedom to explore outside of report boundaries
- Format is not constrained

[Our Focus For Today: Client Reporting Tools



[Scenario I – Casual Ad hoc + Interactive

- Web Intelligence can be used for enterprise report distribution
- ... however its strength is ad hoc information discovery
- Crystal has some interactive features
- ... but falls short of a true interactive ad hoc environment
- Xcelsius offers interactivity
- ... but only within the framework provided by the designer



Roll the tape!

[Scenario II – Prompt Handling

- Enterprise reports are often parameter driven
- Crystal offers stellar prompt handling
 - Cascading Prompts Springfield!
- Web Intelligence has limited prompt handling
 - Cannot validate prompt values
 - Optional prompts did not appear until XI 3
- Xcelsius Prompts
 - Dashboard widgets can feed QaaWS prompts
 - User sets inputs and then refreshes the dashboard



Demonstrate cascading prompts with Crystal and Web Intelligence Rich Client

[Scenario III – What If Scenarios

- Web Intelligence and Crystal are “read” tools
- Web Intelligence 3.1 has input controls for an improved interactive experience
- Only Xcelsius offers write-back interaction for “what if” analysis
 - Controls on a dashboard can write back to the source data
 - Calculations and formulas can react to these changes and display new data



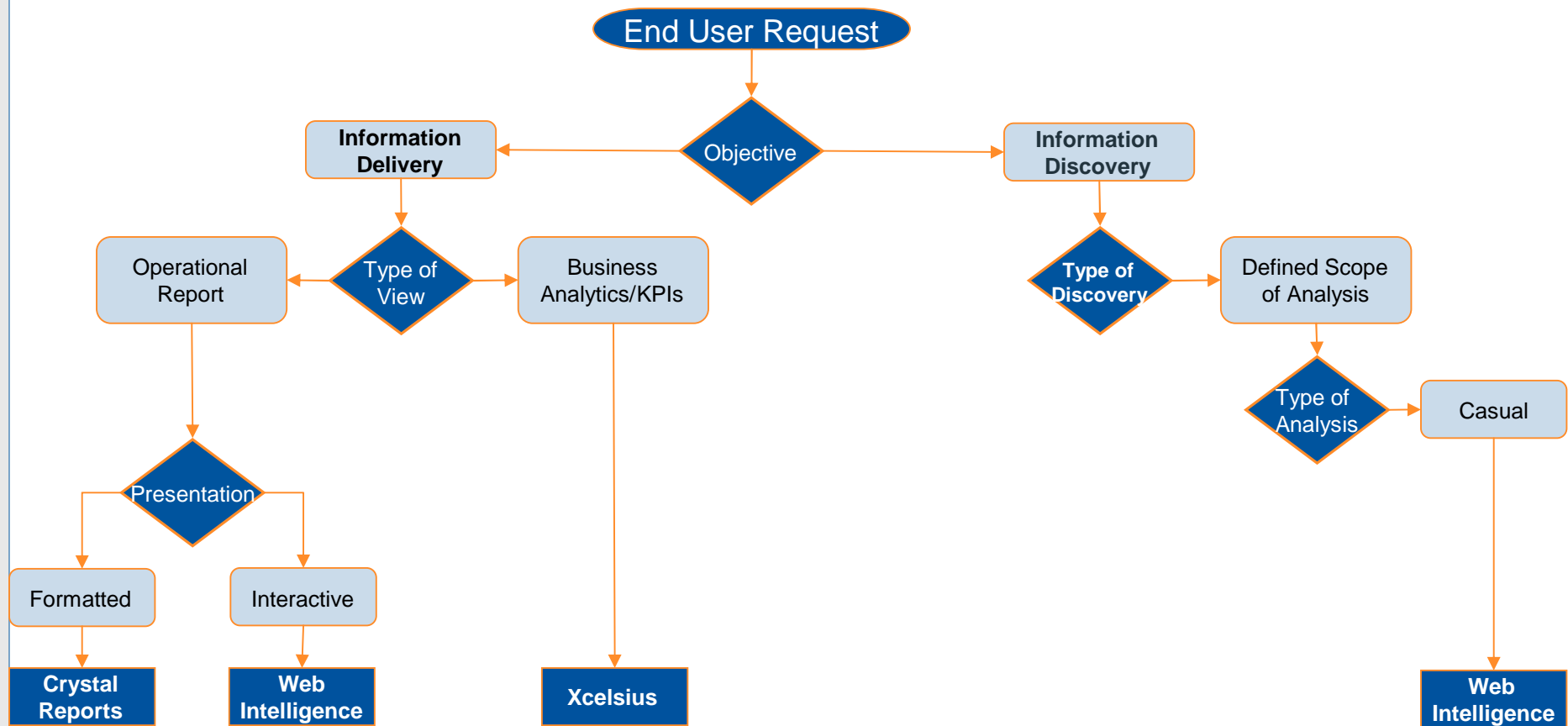
Demonstrate Xcelsius dashboard “what if” capabilities

[eFashion Shipping Discount Calculator

[More Comparison Points To Consider

	Crystal 2008	Web Intelligence	Xcelsius
Slice and Dice Interactivity	No	Yes	No
Section / Block / Structure	Yes	Yes	No
Data Volume	Millions	Millions	20,000 cells
Repository formulas	Yes	Universe Only	No
What If	No	No	Yes
Data Source			
Universe	Yes	Yes	Yes
XML	Yes	No	Yes
Web Services	Yes	No	Yes
Free Hand SQL	Yes	No	No
Others	Yes		

[Our Focus For Today: Client Reporting Tools



Both Crystal and Web Intelligence allow report developers to deliver enterprise content, although Crystal is more suited to this purpose.

Xcelsius provides the most value when used to deliver high-level dashboards and KPI representations.

Web Intelligence provides the best interactive ad hoc experience for data discovery.

[Key Points

- Every tool has strengths and weaknesses
- Don't fall into the trap of "We always use this tool"
- Understanding user behavior helps drive the selection process
- Don't over-develop for your delivery
 - "Don't build a cabin when all you need is a tent"
 - "Don't build your tent with a chainsaw"

[Thank You For Your Time

- Session Title: Discovery Versus Delivery: A Comparison of Client Reporting Tools
- Session code: 603
- Places to find Brian
 - Crystal Blog: <http://www.crystalblogger.com>
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- Places to find Dave
 - BI Blog: <http://www.dagira.com>
 - BOB: <http://busobj.forumtopics.com>
 - SCN: <http://forums.sdn.sap.com/index.jspa>
 - Twitter: http://twitter.com/dagira_tweets

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