**Business Intelligence**

The term **Business Intelligence (BI)** refers to technologies, applications and practices for the collection, integration, analysis, and presentation of business information. The purpose of Business Intelligence is to support better business decision making. Essentially, Business Intelligence systems are data-driven Decision Support Systems (DSS). Business Intelligence is sometimes used interchangeably with briefing books, report and query tools and executive information systems.

**Importance of Business Intelligence tools or software solutions**

Business Intelligence systems provide historical, current, and predictive views of business operations, most often using data that has been gathered into a data warehouse or a data mart and occasionally working from operational data. Software elements support reporting, interactive “[slice-and-dice](http://olap.com/learn-bi-olap/olap-bi-definitions/slice/)” [pivot-table](http://olap.com/learn-bi-olap/olap-bi-definitions/pivot/)analyses, visualization, and statistical data mining. Applications tackle sales, production, financial, and many other sources of business data for purposes that include [business performance management.](http://olap.com/learn-bi-olap/olap-bi-definitions/business-performance-management/) Information is often gathered about other companies in the same industry which is known as benchmarking.

**Business Intelligence Trends**

Currently organizations are starting to see that data and content should not be considered separate aspects of information management, but instead should be managed in an integrated enterprise approach. Enterprise information management brings Business Intelligence and Enterprise Content Management together. Currently organizations are moving towards Operational Business Intelligence which is currently under served and uncontested by vendors. Traditionally, Business Intelligence vendors are targeting only top the pyramid but now there is a paradigm shift moving toward taking Business Intelligence to the bottom of the pyramid with a focus of self-service business intelligence.